

Strider's Of Croydon



Christmas Newsletter 2009



The Mucky Edition!

Chairmans Corner

A Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all. The Club's Christmas celebration started on Saturday in truly traditional manner with a curry and plenty of drink. Thank you Steph for organising the do.

Marathon Training season proper kicks off in the new year. As usual the first run in the new year will be the Addington 4. Not really part of Marathon training other than it is good practice at pacing yourself. For new members this isn't a race the challenge is to guess your time for the four miles and run without a watch. Anyone can win. Weather permitting there will be some seasonal refreshments after this run. Start and finish is on the corner of Shirley Church Road and Upper Shirley Road. Start is at 11am to allow you time to recover from New year celebrations.

On Saturday 2nd You are all encouraged to go and run Parkrun on Roundshaw Downs.

On Sunday 10th The first real event of the Marathon Training season, our annual run from London Bridge to Greenwich and back. For newer members this run is for everyone. There will be a support car at Greenwich and cycle support on route so you don't have to run there and back if you don't want to. As in previous years we aim to finish with breakfast at Cafe Rouge in Hayes Gallery.

After that there will be extended runs on most Sundays during January February and March, mostly from the clubhouse, exact routes to be decided nearer the time. But we have pencilled in the run back from Clapham via the Wandle way (14M) for Feb 7th The run back from Merstham along the North Downs (15M) for March 14th and the final long run before the VLM will be from Clapham to Kingston along the Thames (16 or 20M) on Easter Sunday. Also to continue the run along the first half of the VLM the second half from Tower Bridge onwards will probably be on Jan 24th.

This time last year I was asking whether anyone was interested in setting up a Parkrun event in Lloyd Park, fortunately I found a much drier venue at Roundshaw and by Christmas I think the 25th event will have taken place. So far 37 Striders have run in 86 finishes. Matt Morgan has the fastest time for Striders at 17.38. Grateful thanks to Mick Turner and all the other Striders who have helped at this event. To those of you who haven't done it yet: Its not that difficult to get up for a 9:00 o'clock start on a Saturday morning is it?

Don't forget the other time trial event – 1 mile round Sandilands at about 7:45 on a Friday evening. Unfortunately we couldn't get enough of you out for the December event to knock John Gannon off top spot so he goes away with the prize for most improved newcomer in 2008!!!!

Congratulations to everyone who has run in a cross country this season. After three events the men are still in the lead in Division 2 well done.

And finally, a year late - The Croydon Half Marathon is now looking pretty definite having got at least verbal agreement from Croydon Council on a route. I am expecting a formal meeting with the council in January which will act as kick off for the project team to get together and start planning the event in earnest. Although the official event will not be until spring 2011 I hope we will be able to organise an unofficial closed event this spring. Perhaps Striders vs Harriers. It is almost certain the route will be near enough two laps of the 10K route but starting in Brownlow Road and finishing in Lloyd Park. More details in the next news letter.

And last but not least. Congratulations to Damian and Serena who, round about the time you are reading this will be getting married down under.

Happy Christmas

Robin

Hellrunner

Back in November, a few brave Striders took part in the Hellrunner, a "true" trail race through mud, water, mud, hills and more mud. Your Editor was supposed to take part too but sadly injury prevented me from ending up looking like this (damn!):

Hellrunner - Mud's Good!



First Run – by Steve “The Ref” Tyler



“The Ref” nickname was bestowed upon me by Richard Carter of SLH as, prior to joining Striders, I signed in for runs as a member of Croydon Referees Society and also my key lanyard had a whistle attached. However, the Near as Dammit runs were not my first, that goes back a tad further...

At John Ruskin, I hated cross-country running and would always want to be playing football at Oaks Road but occasionally we ran from the school through Oaks Lane and over Lloyds before returning to our alma mater. On leaving, I joined Glendale United to play Sunday football as we trained (of sorts) at Monks Hill. Pre-season sometimes included hill-reps at the

back of Lloyds leading up from Oaks Lane but even in my twenties, a few months rest cost me all the stamina that I had possessed hitherto.

Winter training was at the Monks Hill Sportscentre and they had the bright idea of a summer mini-marathon from the centre, down Conker Alley to Gravel Hill and down to and along Oaks Road and back to the centre. No, I wasn't hooked. I was also playing on Saturday afternoons for Rusmill (an old Ruskin team) in local football – I had no time for winter running - running was clearly for softies!!!!!!!!!!!!

My first serious run came in the Caterham Half Marathon and I cannot recall too much about it save for it was centred on Queen Park and had a massive hill at the back of the course. Another football season and it was probably also my second run. The Tanners 30, which I first did in 1981, doesn't qualify as it is primarily a walking event but nevertheless harder than a road marathon.

Qualifying as a bastard in black at the age of twenty-five, I eventually started taking running a tad more seriously (please note that seriousness is relative) once I had been invited into the referees system officiating at a good standard of non-League football. I started running the local 10k and 10 milers during the summer months to pass the fitness test and to retain stamina for pre-season and the early-August start to the league programme.

You might find it strange but I was able to churn out 45-48 minute 10ks and 1.45-1.50 half marathons for many years with relative ease, also enjoying such local events and the Netherne and Elmore 7s as well as the Near as Dammit and SLH10. This was due to referee training on Wednesday nights where we did an hour of speedwork on top of our regular floodlit fixtures and whilst it was never easy to keep the weight down, working in an office with regular hours and regular mealtimes was of great benefit.

Coupled with that, a few of us did a Friday lunchtime run from Katharine Street through Park Hill and then round the perimeter of Lloyd Park before returning for a shower – I thought nothing of it. The regime gave me a pb in the 1995 New York Marathon of 3.52.44 and the same year a 1.40.10 half at Fleet. Oh for the ability to do those times again!!

Talking of the marathon, I applied one year and was rejected, mind you I had no idea what I would have been letting myself in for!! On a whim, I sent off an application in October 1992 and promptly forgot all about it until that fateful day that December when an acceptance dropped through the letterbox. A forty-eight hour high before reality thudded in about the work required to get round but that's a different story.

Eventually, all at British Gas in Croydon were awarded the Spanish Archer by the Company and a year later, I joined the Met. By this time, the Isthmian League Referees Secretary had

died and training was not as hard and I eventually landed on Striders doorstep as it was local to work and I could there quickly after (or with night duties before) my shift.

Shift work plays havoc with ones eating habits and I have slowed down a fraction since those heady days of fifteen years ago but there is still a perverse enjoyment at going out and proverbally sweating my nuts off on a Wednesday night. And despite having lived in the Borough for all but four of my fifty-four years, I still occasionally find parts that I don't recognise thanks to Gannon's gallivanting and Jameson's jaunts.

Long may I continue to plague you all.

ANDY GLOVER (1937 – 2009)

The death of Andy Glover was announced before Saturday's Surrey League races at Lloyd Park. Many Striders won't have known Andy, but he helped Striders by acting as a starter for several of our home Veterans League matches after we began taking part in track competition.

In his younger days Andy was a middle-distance runner with Croydon Harriers: in 1959 he ran personal bests of 1 minute 58 for 800 metres and 4 minutes 25 for the mile (times which most Striders would be delighted to match). He retired from athletics to concentrate on business commitments and on raising a family, but returned to the sport as a coach when his daughter Sharon joined Croydon Harriers in the 1970s.

Unlike some of the Harriers' coaches of that period, he was willing to coach enthusiastic athletes regardless of their natural ability. He was excellent at helping athletes to taper their training for important races, and in 1984 he helped me to improve my personal best for 1500 metres to 3 minutes 56. One of his greatest successes was with a young woman named Karen Ellis who moved to Croydon in the early 1980s: she had competed in athletics as a 13-year-old but had spent several years away from competitive sport before joining Croydon Harriers as a 'fun runner'. The first coach whom she approached virtually ignored her, but Andy encouraged her, recognised her potential, and helped her to become Surrey champion at both 800 metres and 1500 metres.

Andy subsequently moved from Croydon to Tadworth but continued to act as a starter at many athletics meetings at Croydon Arena.

Alan Dolton

Eastbourne - A wealth of running opportunities!

By Ian Campbell

Most thoughts of Eastbourne conjure up pictures of elderly people sunning themselves along the promenade and if they are well heeled motoring along in those mobility chairs or if not, being wheeled along in their wheelchairs. This is not an article by the Eastbourne Tourist office, but, there is a lot more to Eastbourne!!

First of all from a running perspective there is the Eastbourne half marathon (March 7th 2010). This has an incline to deal with (up from the promenade to Meads village and around the foot of the downs) but is run on mostly flat promenade and you get to see many of the Eastbourne highlights. It should also get you a decent time.

Then of course, there is the Beachy Head marathon (BHM) or as it used to be called The Seven Sisters marathon. Now here is a race, if you can call it that, where stamina and endurance are really required to complete the course. It has 3,500ft of ascent over the 26.2 miles and as the Seven Sisters is so aptly named has the ups and downs of these as a grand finale, not before you have dealt with over 100 steps up from East Dean. It's enough to put many people off thinking that Eastbourne is a decent place to run. But they would be very wrong indeed.....

There are many opportunities to do some quality training runs on some varying terrain within a few miles of Eastbourne town centre. Here are a few to contemplate.

Promenade run. Short of time or ideas there is a very easy to follow 7 mile out and back route that is totally flat. You can start the route more or less anywhere along the promenade. There are mile markers so you can use these for a fartlek session and its well lit if you are running in darkness. One end of the route is Sovereign Harbour and the other end is Holywell. You have great views of the sea as you go along. Of course, if you wish to extend the run then at either end you can opt to go further on or you can just simply retrace some more of the route.

The Whitbread hole. This is a bit of a find. It is not really known by many people but is a great opportunity to get on the downs direct from the town. It is found by heading up the main coast road from Eastbourne until you get to St Bede's school (this is the start of the BHM). Then you take a sharp left before the ice cream and snack shop. Then just follow your nose as you head along the path way until you come out onto the downs with a spectacular view. You then have a 2 mile circuit around the downs. I personally head off in a anti clockwise direction as that way when you are heading back you get a fantastic view of Eastbourne town, pier and the wonderful coastline beyond. It's a short climb back up and then you are out at St Bedes. You can take a short excursion around Holywell gardens before you get back on the promenade to where you started. Generally a 6 mile run but can be extended.

Warren Hill to East Dean. This requires either a short drive out of Eastbourne to the start at Warren Hill car park or as it is just under 2 miles out from the town centre uphill you could run it. This is a simple but delightful route that follows the South Downs Way (SDW) for a short while and then heads off to East Dean. Once at East

Dean you run downhill through this little village and head along to Birling Gap sheep farm. Here you take a left along some fields heading up to a farm. Then it's a left and you are heading back to the start place car park. The end of the run has a medium uphill to finish off but just before this you will have been running in a valley that is a delight to run. You will be lucky to see anyone on this section as it is hardly walked. In total 8 miles.

Golf course, East Dean, Birling Gap & Beachy Head Lighthouse - all wrapped in one. This is the big brother of the previous route. It is just about 10 miles and is a good challenge. It has a mixture of terrain, downs, paths, tracks and road. You start as before and once at the turn for East Dean you head on instead and along a track that is heading towards Friston. This has a fast section along the track and then on road. Eventually you will reach a junction with a church across the road from you. Take care as you cross and then head down the road past the church towards the National Trust car park. Here you head off in an westerly direction across some fields and through a gate where you are then heading downwards to Birling Gap. Once here you can either go up to the Belle Tout or take the route around the Belle Tout that follows the contour. After a mile or so you will end up at the section of the downs that heads up to Beachy Head. It's a hard climb with a few ups and downs but after some hard running you will have a very rewarding view of Beachy Head lighthouse below and a glorious view of Eastbourne town and much more beyond. Then it's a mile or so on flat downs along to the car park where you started. The alternative is to head down to the ice cream shop by St Bede's.

If you want more ideas there are many more alternative routes that I have explored within and around Eastbourne. Woods, country parks, river runs etc.

If you want to experience any of these and would like to join me in some marathon training next year then I have volunteered to lead a guided session in Eastbourne. This will be on either a Saturday & Sunday or both if you wish. Weekend dates to be agreed and published to all. Contrary again to most people's views there is nightlife in Eastbourne and decent places to go out and eat.....

**SPORTS MASSAGE THERAPY
HELPS REDUCE MUSCULAR SORENESS AFTER TRAINING OR
COMPETITION**

HELPS RECOVERY FROM SOFT TISSUE INJURY

**ALAN DOLTON, LSSM Dip, ITEC Dip, MSMA, MISRM
UK ATHLETICS LEVEL 3 CLUB COACH**

**70 WARREN ROAD, ADDISCOMBE, CROYDON
TELEPHONE 020 8656 0532**

DISCOUNTED RATES FOR STRIDERS OF CROYDON

More Mud from Mick Turner...

Mud, sweat and beers - an introduction to cross country



The other evening our glorious chairman was recounting his schoolday cross country runs - reminiscing that only one child had been 'lost' during the school event. Best not to enquire how 'lost' as he leads us on another awayday run into the country. Despite this past 'incident' Robin loved his cross country running as a boy – like I do now. I also love converting road runners to off-road running in general, and cross country racing in particular. This is intended as a short introduction to cross country running but relate equally to off-road running. Remember that our year-round Sunday morning and summer Wednesday evening club runs take place along the many trails and tracks around Croydon.

Season

Though off-road races take place all year round the traditional cross country season runs from mid October to late February. Events that Striders have participated in:

- The Surrey League - the premier XC competition with separate races of 5 miles for men and 3 and 5 miles for women. 4 events are spread through the season on usually 2-lap courses.
- East Surrey League - These events are lower key than the Surrey League
 - 5 mile race usually in late Oct/early Nov
 - 2 mile relay in January.
- London, Surrey, Southern, South of Thames & National championships - one off generally high-quality events of varying distances for men and women.
- Events organised by clubs such as:
 - Our own Switchback 5 in late September.
 - South London Harriers' Gibb (5 miles), Pirie (10 miles) and summer series of 'Near as Damn It' 10K races.
 - Croydon Harriers' inter-club event in late February.
 - Other fun events include the The Eridge 10 and Pilgrims Way Run (8 ½ miles)
- Free 5k parkruns – our local parkrun at Roundshaw Downs or its sister event at Banstead Woods. Every Saturday ay 9.00am.
- New breed events such as Hellrunner, Grim, Ballbuster, Tough Guy etc – varied distances and difficulty

Entry fees

Events such as the South London Harriers 'Near as Damn it' or Pirie range from £3 to £7. You won't get a goody bag or medal - just the enjoyment and pain. Other races such as Eridge 10 are the same as road races. New breed events such as Grim, Hellrunner or Tough Guy can be much, much more expensive. The club usually pays for entries when runners represent the club in league or championship races.

How quick do I have to be?

Not that quick at all, however some races aren't suitable for the slowest runners. If in doubt have a look at the previous year's results. Chris will always give clues in his emails promoting the races or ask a committee member or club colleague for advice.

Watch your step

We've had the occasional fall or twisted ankle on a Sunday morning club run, even amongst those used to running off-road. Though difficult at first the more off-road running you do the stronger tendons and ligaments around ankles and knees become. It still pays, however, to tread carefully to avoid those pesky tree roots and stones.

Times & PBs

All XC courses are different so it's best not to compare one course to another. Underfoot conditions can also make the same course run minutes slower year on year. It's best not to get hung up on times, instead concentrate on runners around you, using them as targets to pick off in the second half of races – if you get your pacing right.

Pacing

Getting your pace right is important for all races - but especially cross country. Don't get carried away at the beginning of the race and you'll be OK. It's always far more enjoyable to be passing people during the second half.

Form

It might sound obvious but an important element of XC races is learning how to run uphill and downhill. Though equally applying to road races, it always seems that bit harder when trudging through mud.

Chris's hill speed sessions on Upfield are a good place to practice your uphill running. Staying tall, shortening your stride and using your arms will become second nature once you've done a few of these. It also gives you something to concentrate on when the going gets tough.

As a rule leaning forward and letting yourself go loose like a child as you speed downhill is the best way to go. It's possible to pick up lots of time and places in races if you get this right. Having the correct footwear, (See separate article on XC footwear), is vital to give you the confidence to do this.

The benefits

In the past couple of years I've used the XC season to lay a base of training for 10k, 10 mile and Half Marathon road PBs in the spring. As I'm relatively injury prone I find running XC allows me to get fitter quicker. But above all **it's fun** – especially when enjoying that hard-earned pint or three afterwards with fellow club members.



Chris 'off-road marathon man' Morton detested cross country runs at school - but just look at him now. This could be you! If you're thinking of trying a race the East Surrey XC relays or the Croydon Harriers invitation event in February are good places to start. Or there's always the Roundshaw Downs parkrun. I'll see you there any Saturday morning at 9.00.

BACK TO THE EPSOM TEN by Alan Dolton

In her usual email asking for contributions to this newsletter, our editor asked the question "What was your race of the year?". Personally I think that my 'race of the year' was probably the Surrey over-50 400 metre championship, held at Ewell on a pleasant summer day. There was only one other competitor in my age-group, and he seemed to be even less suited to the distance than I was (his best events were the 100 metres and the shot putt), so I was able to come away with a gold medal for relatively little effort and much less discomfort than I usually feel when racing.

However even I cannot ramble on for very long about a race which lasts for less than 80 seconds, so rather than talk about the joys of being able to stop running after only one lap of the track, I thought that it might be appropriate to recommend the Epsom Ten as a race which very few Striders seem to compete in, but which deserves a wider entry.

My very first ten-mile race was the Epsom Ten, when I was a relative newcomer to running back in the autumn of 1980. For the record, I finished that race in 65 minutes and one second: my finishing sprint was not quite quick enough to get under the 65-minute mark. The runner who finished one place behind me in that race was a 52-year-old named Ken Crooke, who was Croydon Harriers' cross-country team manager. Now that I have myself passed the age of 52, I can appreciate just how well Ken was running at the time: 65 minutes on an undulating course is quite a respectable time for anyone over the age of 50. And, thirty years later, Ken is still competing occasionally: he was the last finisher in the 2008 Switchback, where he was overheard as still having sufficient breath to regale Serena with the details of his life story.

I had not run the Epsom Ten for quite a few years before deciding to enter this year's event, and the course has changed a bit since 1980. The race is held on a well-marshalled one-lap course, starting and finishing near the famous Epsom racecourse. Unusually for a road race, there are quite spacious changing-rooms. They are the same changing-rooms that the jockeys use, complete with some very large scales on which one can check one's weight (although some Striders may prefer not to take advantage of this opportunity).

The race usually attracts a field of between 200 and 250 runners (this year there were 235 finishers). The start is on the B290 very close to Tattenham Corner, and the police close the road to traffic for a few minutes so that the race can start safely. The size of the field means that the start is much less congested than many other local road races I have competed in. I was surprised to find that I was the only runner from either of the Croydon clubs. The first mile of the race is downhill as the race passes the racecourse grandstand before heading south-west to Langley Vale. There is then quite a long uphill section as the race heads south up Headley Road, passing under the M25 before reaching the village of Headley. The five-mile point is reached at one of the highest points on the course, just before turning left into the B2032. This means that unless one starts much too fast, it is a good course to practise running 'negative splits': I took over 37 minutes for the first half of the race, but was able to run the second half in almost exactly 35 minutes.

The course then crosses back over the M25 before leaving the B2032 and heading north to Walton-on-the-Hill where, for runners who like admiring the scenery, there is a picturesque pond at about the seven-mile mark. Still heading north, the course then drops down into Tadworth and there is then a bit of a 'switchback' section with some rolling hills before one reaches the nine-mile mark just before Tattenham Corner. The last mile, like the first mile, is nicely downhill and the race finishes in a side road just to the west of the grandstand and changing-rooms.

I was surprised not to see any other Striders at the race. The course is possibly a bit too undulating for anyone who is obsessed by setting a personal best, but none of the hills are too difficult for anyone who is used to our secretary's choice of routes for our Wednesday and Sunday club runs. The route was very well-marshalled, there is some pleasant rural scenery, the field is not too congested, and there are good changing-rooms. And for those like myself who tend to use public transport, the start and finish are within easy reach of Tattenham Corner station, which has a direct rail service from East Croydon.

After finishing the race, I reflected that it would be good if we could adopt a similar route for the planned Croydon Half-Marathon. If we started in Forestdale or New Addington, we could then head south towards Limpsfield, passing under the M25 and returning north via Westerham. But the route would need a lot of marshals, and I gather that at present it is more likely that we will be using a less scenic but safer route involving two laps of the well-known Croydon 10K course. Nevertheless, I would definitely recommend the Epsom Ten to anyone who would prefer to run a road race in a slightly more rural setting than many of the races which we are used to.

Marathon Season is looming faster than you think!!

By Steve Tyler

How many weeks to Christmas? For those doing a spring marathon, the winter will fly by. You/we/I need to think how we are going to schedule our training i.e. the gradual build-up in distances covered. When do you start – before or after Christmas?

Robin will doubtless advise us separately of his annual series of long Sunday runs but there are numerous other events in the South-East for your delectation, to get your legs used to doing distances greater than the Wednesday night club run and in the early morning to boot.

Subject to final confirmation, there should be a couple of club training runs on the second and fourth Sundays in January, straddled by three ten milers, see the attached list. One size doesn't fit all, this schedule may suit your planning, it may not but it does give you some idea of what you can do to build up to April 25th. Not forgetting the Builders Arms that evening – but after a bath, please!!

Parkrun at Roundshaw

In an attempt to get more of the club to run the free 5k parkrun on the site of the old Croydon airport, the 2nd January run will incorporate the first of 4 special Striders' parkruns in 2010. Striders will receive a memento for completing all 4 events, with special prizes for improvement and more.

37 Striders have run a total of 87 events so far. Our youngest and oldest participants share the highest number of Roundshaw runs by Striders - Jemma Upton and Kevin Burnett have run 7 of the 22 events.

I'd also like to thank the many Striders who have volunteered. Volunteering 4 times at Roundshaw, plus helping out at another qualifying event, will now also help you in the marathon ballot for the 2011 London Marathon.

Dates for Striders' special parkruns are

2nd January 2010

10th April 2010

3rd July 2010

2nd October 2010

If you haven't registered before registering once at <http://www.parkrun.org.uk/Register/UK.aspx> allows you to run any of the 23 parkruns across the UK.

Parking is free on Imperial Way by Costco - or you can get the 119 bus to Purley Colonnades. The start is a short walk away down the Purley Way behind the Battle of Britain memorial.

<http://www.parkrun.org.uk/roundshaw>

25 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 1984/85

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country Championships were held at Camberley on 8 December. The winner was Rachel Disley of Hounslow. Hounslow also won the team event (despite having their headquarters in Middlesex rather than Surrey).

One big frustration for road runners is running a good race on a course which subsequently transpires to be short of the advertised distance. There was an example of this on 30 December, with a race at Crystal Palace which was advertised as 10 kilometres. One of Striders' youngest members, Simon Smith, set what would then have been a Striders club record of 35 minutes 15, but the organisers subsequently agreed that the course was short. (It was probably at least 300 metres short, as future Strider Alan Dolton placed 22nd in 30 minutes 11, almost a minute faster than his lifetime best on an officially measured course.)

The men's Surrey Cross-Country Championships were held at Brockwell Park on 5 January. The individual winner was Richard Partridge of Aldershot, beating Bob Treadwell (Surrey Beagles) by just four seconds. Epsom won the team event for the second successive year.

The completion of the M25 was marked by a ten-mile road race, starting and finishing at the Leatherhead junction, on 27 January. Cambridge Harriers won the team event with Croydon Harriers second, led by Alan Dolton who placed seventh in 53 minutes 11. Eleven Striders completed the race, led by Mick Meech who ran 62 minutes 35. His successor as club secretary, Ron Carver, ran 65 minutes 06.

The Southern Women's Cross-Country Championships were held at Ipswich on 2 February. The race was won by the South African runner Zola Budd, competing for Aldershot as a guest but ineligible for the trophy as she had not lived in the UK for the required nine months. The trophy went to the runner-up, Surrey champion Rachel Disley of Hounslow. The team event was won by London Olympiades (who no longer exist). The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League completed its sixth season with a match on a snow-covered Brockwell Park on 9 February. Croydon Harriers won the league title for the third successive year. Belgrave placed second while South London Harriers were third. This was only SLH's third season in the league: they had only begun accepting women as members in 1982, after

more than 100 years as a male-only club. The league comprised just one division, of 17 clubs.

The Surrey Cross-Country League completed its 23rd season with matches on 16 February. The final Division One match was held on South London Harriers' course at Coulsdon. Having won the first three matches, Aldershot were already certain to retain the league championship, and consequently fielded a below-strength team. Ranelagh won the match with Herne Hill second. In the overall table, Herne Hill placed second with Ranelagh third. Belgrave (4th) and SLH (5th) also retained their Division One status, while Epsom and Omega were relegated to Division Two. Woking were already almost certain of the Division Two championship before the final match at Lightwater, but there was a close battle for the second promotion place between Croydon Harriers and Thames Hare & Hounds. Before the match Croydon had 765 points while Thames had 776. Croydon clinched promotion, winning a close match with 182 points, while Thames scored 191 and Woking 200. Croydon's team at Lightwater included two future Striders: Alan Dolton was 23rd and Peter Yarlett 36th. Guildford won the Division Three title, with Mitcham also promoted in second place. Striders had not yet entered the league.

There was a strong field for the Woking 10-mile road race on 24 February. Keith Penny of Cambridge won in 48 minutes 21 seconds, with twelve runners breaking 50 minutes. Robin Dickson of Croydon Harriers ran well to be second over-40 (and 50th overall) in 52 minutes 50, while club colleague Alan Dolton placed 27th in a lifetime best 51 minutes 32.

The National Cross-Country Championships were held on a muddy course at Milton Keynes on 2 March. Aldershot won the team event for the third successive year. South London Harriers placed 72nd, with their leading runners being Andy Evans (181st) and Francis Upcott (203rd). Croydon Harriers only managed five finishers and failed to complete a team.

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 2000



From 1986 to 1998, the Surrey Cross-Country Championships had been held in December. However for the 1999/2000 season, the Surrey AA reverted to the previous practice of holding them in January. The championships were held on 8 January 2000, and were on our home course at Lloyd Park for the first time since 1979. On a very muddy course, the men's race was won by Dave Taylor of Herne Hill, three seconds ahead of Boxhill's Paul Haywood. South London Harriers won the team event with Thames Hare & Hounds second. Striders placed 12th. Our first man home was Neil Furze who placed 66th of the 180 finishers. Gerry Crispie was 71st and our other scorers were John McGilvray (107th), Nigel Costiff (119th), Colin Cotton (126th) and Ken Low (129th).

The women's race was won by Zara Hyde of Woking, with Clare Pauzers of Herne Hill placing second. South London Harriers won the team event from Herne Hill. Striders' women were seventh. Jane Lansdown ran very well to finish 14th. Our other runners were Kate Potter (52nd), Barbara Gambrill (61st) and Michele Lawrence (66th).

A week later South London Harriers held the annual Pirie 10 mile cross-country race. We placed second, behind SLH, in the team event. John McGilvray led us home in 20th place with Ken Low 22nd, Nigel Costiff 24th and Mick Gambrill 46th.

The South of the Thames Championships were held on 22 January at Crawley. Striders were ninth in the team event. Tony Sheppard led us home in 60th place with Gerry Crispie 68th, John McGilvray 94th and Ken Low 100th.

The Surrey Cross-Country League completed its 38th season with matches on 5 February. Belgrave won Division One by just 34 points from Thames Hare & Hounds. Herne Hill were third with South London Harriers fourth. West Four Harriers won Division Two, gaining promotion to Division One for the first time, while Croydon Harriers placed second. Epsom and Kingston were relegated to Division Three.

The final Division Three match was held at Wimbledon Common. Stragglers and Guildford made sure of promotion to Division Two. Striders went into the match in sixth place and with only a small lead over Haslemere Border. We responded well to finish fifth in the match and ensure our survival in Division Three. Tony Sheppard led us home in 10th place while Neil Furze had an excellent run to place 11th, a big improvement on his previous races. Gerry Crispie was 22nd with Bob Ewen 43rd and Ken Low 50th. Our other scorers were 55 John McGilvray, 57 Dave Shaw, 68 Simon Smith, 71 Alan Dolton and 77 Colin Cotton. Haslemere also avoided relegation by just six points because Walton, who had been more than 200 points clear of the relegation zone before the match, turned up with only four runners and finished a well-beaten last. They were duly relegated along with Veterans AC. Holland Sports won Division Four with Elmbridge second.

In the Wokingham Half-Marathon on 13 February, Kate Potter (now known as Kate Custis) set a club women's over-35 record of 1 hour 32 minutes 48 seconds.

The Surrey Womens Cross-Country League completed its 21st season with a match at Brockwell Park on 19 February. The Division One race was won by Meredith Pannett of Dulwich. South London Harriers won the match to clinch the Division One championship. They were led by Carol Evans who placed fourth in the race. Thames Hare & Hounds placed second with Herne Hill third. Stragglers and Veterans AC were relegated. The Division Two race was won by Sara Stoddart of Holland Sports, finishing ahead of all the Division One runners. Sara's team-mate Maggie Statham was second while Striders' Jane Lansdown had an excellent run to finish third. Woking won Division Two with Holland Sports second, British Airways third, Wimbledon Windmilers fourth and Striders fifth.

In the Camberley Half-Marathon on 27 February, Neil Furze ran a lifetime best of 1 hour 18 minutes 44 seconds. Diane Ballard ran 1 hour 40 minutes 56 seconds.

FIVE YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 2005



The Surrey Cross-Championships were held at Lloyd Park on 8 January. Striders' best performance came from Sophie Shaw in the under-13 girls' race. She ran strongly to place 10th of the 45 finishers. In the senior women's race Serena Tracey ran well to place 29th of the 75 finishers, moving through the field after a cautious start and covering the five-mile course in 37 minutes 57. Club colleague Faye Stammers was 44th (40.30) with Kerry Backshell 48th (41.21).

Striders' senior men were without several of our leading runners, and had to settle for 12th place. Their best performance came from John Foster who placed 63rd, covering the seven and a half mile course in 50 minutes 14 seconds. Iain Harrison also ran well to place 67th (50.29).

The penultimate Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season took place at Petersham on 15 January. Striders' women did well to place third in the match and retain third place in the league table. The team was led by Serena Stracey, who produced an excellent run to finish fifth, covering the 5800 metre course in 23 minutes 46 seconds. Both Clare McFadzean and Faye Stammers also ran well to produce their best performances for the club, with Clare finishing 13th in 25.30, just one place and two seconds ahead of Faye. Patricia Carr ran steadily for 41st place (29.23) and Amalia Da Silva Lima completed the scoring team in 46th (29.46).

Meanwhile Striders' men were hosting a Surrey Cross-Country League Division Three match at Lloyd Park. Our team was weakened by some late withdrawals, and finished in a disappointing fifth place. Our best performance came from Justin Macenhill, who was short of training following treatment for a hip injury, but who moved steadily through the field to finish in ninth place, covering the muddy five-mile course in 31 minutes 20 seconds. John Foster confirmed his status as our leading veteran with another good run to place 15th in 32 minutes 40, just one place and four seconds ahead of the improving Iain Harrison. Team manager Chris Morton was 31st (34.31) with Damian Macenhill 33rd (34.42).

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country League completed its 26th season with a match at Ewell on 12 February. Striders produced an excellent team performance to finish second in the match, and gain promotion to Division One for only the second time in the club's history. Wimbledon Windmilers won the match with 39 points, but Striders' total of 103 placed us ahead of Walton (111) and Holland Sports (129), and well clear of promotion rivals Sutton Runners. Striders' women were led home by Serena Stracey who produced another good run to place fifth, covering the muddy six-kilometre course in 27 minutes 15 seconds. She was well supported by Clare McFadzean, who continued her improvement to place 11th (29.19), and Faye Stammers who was not far behind in 14th (30.02). Patricia Carr ran steadily to place 33rd (33.44), and Pat Edwards completed the scoring team in 40th (34.38).

On the same day Striders' men produced our best performance of the season to win the final Surrey League Cross-Country Division Three match of the season at Wimbledon Common, and gain promotion back to Division Two after just one year in Division Three. Our total of 258 points saw us well clear of nearest rivals Epsom (308), Sutton (329) and Dorking (383). In the overall Division Three table, Epsom were clear champions with 1263 points, but our total of 1471 saw us take the second promotion spot, ahead of Dorking (1501), Sutton (1502) and Woking (1624).

Our team at Wimbledon was led by the consistent Justin Macenhill, who placed tenth of the 122 finishers, covering the five-mile course in 30 minutes 29 seconds. Scott Antony, in only his second race for the club, produced an excellent run to place 13th (31.03), while Iain Harrison continued his improvement to place 15th (31.40). Striders packed very well with our next six scorers finishing within less than 30 seconds. Damian Macenhill was next home for the club in 25th (33.03), closely followed by John Foster (26th in 33.13) and Andy Allison (27th in 33.14). Club stalwart Nigel Davidson was 31st (33.25) while Toby Watson made an excellent debut to finish 33rd (33.29), just one place and one second ahead of team manager Chris Morton. Paul Finch completed the scoring team in 44th place (34.23).

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 1 January – Addington 4, 11am Corner of Upper Shirley Road & Shirley Church Road

Saturday 9th January – Surrey Cross Country at Lloyd Park
MARSHALS WANTED!

Sunday 10th January – First Away Run of the Marathon Season
London Bridge to Greenwich

Saturday 6th February – Final Surrey League Cross Country
Races of the Season

Friday 12th February – Provisional Date for Quiz Night

And Finally.....

A (very) young John Gannon, shows us that once upon a time, he really did have hair!



And Your Clubmates Wish All Striders A Very Happy Christmas & An Injury Free New Year!.....

...with some pictures from this year's Christmas Party....

