

Striders of Croydon

MARCH 2021 MAGAZINE



**Selena Wong and Debra Bourne at our Xmas Trek at South Norwood Country Park
(photo by Hannah Luffman)**

CONTENTS:

Dates for your Diary
Chair's Corner (by Tony Flowers)
Jenny Booth (by Debra Bourne)
Chinese New Year Challenge: Water (by Matthew Stone)
The Centurion Virtual NDW 50 (by Rachel Lindley)
Halloween 100: Keep Going When The Plan Goes Wrong (by Debra Bourne)
Christmas parkrun – You Could Have Run It !! (by Stephen Tyler)
Speed Training For Older Runners (by Alan Dolton)
Book Review: From Last to First (Charlie Spedding)
Striders In The National Rankings
25 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Spring 1996
20 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Spring 2001
10 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Spring 2011

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun 9 May – Surrey 5000m Championship – Kingsmeadow (tbc)
Sun 6 Jun – Surrey Masters Track & Field Championships – Kingsmeadow (tbc)
Sun 12 Sep – Surrey Track Walking Championships – Sutton Arena (tbc)
Sun 3 October – London Marathon (Striders marshalling)



**Club secretary Mick Turner at the Xmas Trek at South Norwood Country Park
(photo by Hannah Luffman)**

CHAIR'S CORNER MARCH 2021

It is with sadness that we first note the recent passing of Jenny Booth, known fondly to many Striders and other local runners through her many years of Lloyd parkrun volunteering. Jenny will be greatly missed within the local running community and beyond.

It has been heartening to see how much engagement there has been with our socially distanced and virtual events over the last few months. Matt Stone took on the Chinese New Year Challenge with gusto and is in his themed element taking us on an interesting tour of watery places in surrounding areas.

What a long time it seems since our own Rachel Lindley finished first woman at the Croydon Half Marathon back in March 2020. Rachel takes on the virtual Centurion NDW 50 over the Lincolnshire countryside and gives us her thoughts and feedback on her 'big five' key elements of ultra-running.

Debra Bourne experiments with a new nutritional strategy for the Samphire Hoe Halloween 100 miles but also encounters an unexpected challenge with blustery conditions exacerbated by a 'sound mirror'!

Steve Tyler maintains his ever-present Christmas Day Lloyd parkrun record with a solo jaunt around a quagmire of a course. His description of our local course on one of its more challenging days will no doubt have reader heads nodding.

Alan Dolton follows up his article in our previous issue on training for a fast 10-mile or 10-kilometre race with more expert advice on approaching speed training for older runners. He also provides a book review of 'From Last to First' by Olympic marathoner Charlie Spedding.

Alan further provides a round-up of Striders placings in the 2020 National Rankings for track and field. Congratulations to all mentioned! Are you in there? Read on.

Reading the highlights of local athletics in previous years, also provided courtesy of Alan, I was surprised to find out that we once had a brief incarnation, albeit never officially ratified, as South Croydon Striders! See page 32 for a copy of the front page of our newsletter from 25 years ago!

Best wishes and here's to very soon running together again.

Tony



JENNY BOOTH

I am really sad to inform everyone that Jenny Booth, long-time stalwart of the Lloyd parkrun volunteering team, has died.

Jenny first started volunteering at Banstead Woods parkrun, in the very early days of parkrun, while her husband Keith was running there, and also volunteered at Roundshaw Downs parkrun, but moved over to Lloyd parkrun, first volunteering in December 2010, then volunteering more regularly with us during 2011, becoming a Run Director, core volunteer and member of the management team. She volunteered with us 354 times, and in the region of 500 times in total when her stints at other parkruns are considered as well. She has filled almost every non-running volunteering role over the years, from marshal to Run Report writer. She was dedicated to the Lloyd parkrun community, and if her husband Keith wasn't coming to run, she would journey by a combination of bus, train and tram to reach us, whether in sunshine or in rain. I always looked forward to seeing her on weeks when we were volunteering together, and knew that Lloyd parkrun was in safe hands if Jenny was Run Director while I was away. Unflappable and always smiling (except occasionally when dealing with gadgets that wouldn't work how they should do), she will be hugely missed, not only at Lloyd parkrun but in all the other communities that knew and loved her.

Our thoughts are with Keith Booth at this sad time.

We will honour her at a memorial Lloyd parkrun for her when circumstances allow. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cancer Research UK in her name.

Debra Bourne



Jenny presenting a parkrun certificate to former Strider Melanie Hinds

CHINESE NEW YEAR CHALLENGE: WATER (by Matthew Stone)

I was interested by the Chinese New Year Challenge organised by Striders and pleased to find out my element was water because, having competed in several Aquathlons, I naturally think running and swimming go well together.

Running beside water can be a relaxing and enjoyable experience for most people. It adds interest to look out for water birds as you run along, and it is surprising what you can sometimes see – though I think they were hiding from the cold and snow this particular Sunday.

This is just a list of the watery places which John Punt and I went past on our run, and the birds we have seen on previous occasions. There are more photos taken from this run on Striders' Facebook page.

- Waddon Ponds (0.3K), small park with a claw shaped pond, with lots of geese
- Wandle, end of Mill Lane, where it emerges from Waddon Ponds (0.7K)
- Strava GPS track lost here, ran along the Wandle to Hilliers Lane where I had arranged to meet John. I often see an egret by the bridge here, not today though (1.6K)
- Into the start of Beddington Park (1.8K); there are several strands of the Wandle flowing at different levels here



Brick bridge in Beddington Park (2.5K)



John suggested running across the grass to a pond in the centre of the park (2.7K). GPS track recovered. Nice to see a new pond that I had not noticed before. Next, we headed to the Beddington Farmlands.

There is a website about this: <http://bfnr.org.uk/> . It is situated around the Beddington Incinerator and consists of wildlife habitat, mainly for birds of a watery persuasion.

The entrance was flooded, took a photo of this before running through the middle of it (3.2K) The trail was quite wet, there are three bird hides where you can look over different lakes.



The last bird hide has had the most birds when I have looked. John showed me the stork that visits the lake on a previous occasion. Some stork chicks were born in the UK last year, the first time since 1416. (4.4K)

Crossing a bridge over the railway, we re-joined the Wandle at the end of Watermead Lane (5.9K). Here it was apparent that the water level was quite high and the Wandle current was the strongest I have seen, gushing along enthusiastically. The cold had kept the little flies absent this morning.



We ran along the river path by Poulter Park and into Ravensbury Park. It was here on a previous run we had spotted a Kingfisher, but no such luck today.

We entered into Morden Hall Park (8.3K) and went off to the right, away from the Wandle here, but there was plenty of mud. John pointed out the Egyptian Geese here, which are quite big birds for me to have not noticed before. We didn't go through the Wetlands / Boardwalk because of social distancing, but ran past the exit into Dean City Farm (10.5K).



Along the river bank past a riverside pub and the weir at Abbey Mills, where the water was flowing with gusto, then under the road and into the Savacentre car park.

There is an open water feature on the north side of the Savacentre, then we crossed over to reach the most northerly part of the run in Wandle Park (Colliers Wood) (12K), where we turned back to Croydon.

You could carry on running here, often by the Wandle, through Wandle Meadow Nature Park and King George's Park to where the Wandle joins the Thames in Wandsworth, however we turned back towards Mitcham.



This was a comparative desert until we got to 3 Kings Pond (which I know as Mitcham Duck Pond) (14.2K), which I have only passed from a distance before and not appreciated the fountain.



I think we missed a couple of small ponds here, but went on to Mitcham Common, and the Seven Islands Pond (15.2K). I think this is the prettiest pond on the route; we were so wet at this stage that we cleaned our shoes by wading into the water. The common was very muddy. Then we went on to the pond by the side of the twin hills on the cross-country course, that many Striders will know, which was overflowing its banks (16.7K).

There wasn't any water to run beside then for a while until we got to Wandle Park (Croydon) (19.8K) by the tram stop. I should have started here really, since this is the highest point of the Wandle; however, I would have had to get up 15 minutes earlier.

I would recommend this run, probably starting at Wandle Park (Croydon) and half-marathon distance to get it all in. It is also possible to catch the tram at Phipps Bridge, for example, to cut it shorter.

THE CENTURION VIRTUAL NDW 50 (by Rachel Lindley)

The NDW50, usually in May, is one of my favourites. Of course in 2020 it got pushed to July, and then November, and finally went ahead as a virtual event. With all my 'A' races cancelled since the Croydon Half (HOW long ago does that seem?), I decided to have a go at the virtual solo event anyway.

I was staying at my mum's in a village in North Lincs, as my dear dad died in October. Lockdown 2, the November one (which feels like it never really ended?), began the day of his funeral, so, with the office closed anyway, I stayed on with her.

I'd evolved a 20-mile loop from her house and decided to do it clockwise, then anti-clockwise, then add a 10-mile loop to make up the distance. The route was flat, on local quiet roads, trails and farm tracks. It was the end of November and I knew I'd be running after dark, so I treated myself to a new headtorch in an online sale.

On the day, I set out at 8am to catch the sunrise. The weather was coolish but calm, which was a relief after the strong headwinds of previous weeks. I had no idea what to expect, but I was excited to spend the day out on my own and see how it went. I'd done five 50-mile ultras before, but never solo.



The first lap went pretty well and the second lap started fine (after a slightly-too-long aid-station stop in the nice warm house). But by about mile 35, the wheels fell off and it was a long run-walk-run-walk-walk-run-walk-walk-walk-run home.



Still, I did it and I'm proud of that. In fact looking back now, a few days after doing the Centurion virtual 50km solo, I have no idea how I managed 50 miles solo. Seems a bit mad

now. And with hindsight, I can see what went wrong. Of the big five (Train, Fuel, Kit, Pace, Commit - we're all different but for me at least, these seem to be the key elements of running a good ultra), I only got one right. But you learn a lot more from getting it wrong! Here's a few things about the Big Five that I learned:



Train: I hadn't trained in any kind of *structured* way since March 2020 when every race got cancelled. I had been entered for London Marathon in April, an ultra in Cornwall in June (my 40th birthday present to myself) and then Yorkshire Marathon in October. So it was set to be a high-intensity, high-training year. But... 2020.

I kept running all year (thank goodness we could) and had plenty of long runs along the way, with the Centurion 100-mile week in May, a solo 40-miler for my 40th birthday in June (as I couldn't go to Cornwall), the Vanguard Marathon in August, the wonderful Striders' Virtual London Marathon in October, plus several jaunts on the NDW and Vanguard Way, or long runs to and from London parks to meet friends for distanced coffees when that was allowed. I loved all the virtual challenges and the solo or paired speedwork organised by Striders / Chris too. But I just wasn't motivated to train week after week consistently. My mileage for the year was actually pretty similar to every other year, but from March onwards, I was running for fun rather than training seriously. And after dad died, 6 weeks before the virtual 50-miler, I was running to give myself time and space, not with any training goal in mind.

Lesson: we don't always have to be training; just running is ok! My 2020 running gave me far more than just training. But... I also learnt I do need to train consistently if I want to do a strong 50-miler; I need a plan, not just miles. Most of all, however, I learned that I am so grateful I have running in my life. It helped so much in the tough times, and it was fun to run with no plan before that too. It wasn't good preparation for a 50-miler. But who cares?

Kit: I had gone to be with mum for a weekend back in October, to keep her company while dad was in hospital. But he got worse, and I stayed, for 10+ weeks in the end. Thankfully I had one set of running kit with me, but none of my ultra kit for a 50-miler. I ran with an old waist-pack of mum's which fitted a 1-litre plastic bottle in. That had been fine for a couple of 20 mile runs I'd done, but by 30 miles it was chafing badly. And the new headtorch, tested on a couple of short runs, packed up in the last 8 miles, meaning I had to head back from the fields to the village in the dark and run (crawl, by then) up and down the main streets which had streetlamps for the last few miles. Not that I really cared about scenery by then, but it was a bit soul-destroying to finish with endless loops. **Lesson:** kit that works for 3 hours might not work for the whole day.

Fuel: My 20-mile laps meant I could call in at home to refill bottles and get more food. Best feature of a virtual ultra was mum being at home to make me real coffee between laps! And a clean warm loo! But idiotically, or perhaps because I didn't have my usual race pack, I didn't carry enough water. 1 litre was fine for the first lap when I was fresh but the re-fill didn't last long in the second lap at all. I had to call in at a shop and buy another bottle. Thankfully I had packed a face mask and debit card. Also idiotically, I didn't eat anything until mile 15. I really don't know why not. Perhaps because there were no hills to walk and munch up, or no checkpoints. 'Eat early and often' is such good advice for ultras. I didn't. **Lesson:** do.

Pace: Another bit of ultra-wisdom I ignored was 'If you don't walk in the first 5 miles, you won't run in the last 5.' Pretty much came true. Perhaps because my route was so flat? Or because I wasn't stopping to eat? I should know better but I started too quickly and delayed eating and walking till too late. I was doing around 9-minute miles for the first 10 miles, and 15-minute miles for the last 10 miles. Textbook #pacingfail and #fuellingfail. Why do we make the same mistakes again and again? **Lesson:** don't be pigheaded! You had nothing to prove.

Commit: Finally, the one I got right!

I knew that to complete 50 miles on my own, I really had to want to do it. Any half-heartedness would come back to bite by the 30-mile point as I got tired. So I did ask myself seriously before I set out if I definitely wanted to do it – and the answer was yes. I think that's

why I was able to carry on, even when I realised it was going to be a long trudge home. Quitting never crossed my mind as an option. Even as I sat on someone's wall around 40 miles for a rest, recognising the tank was empty, I knew I was going to carry on. I wanted it for a good reason, so I did it. **Lesson:** commit mentally, genuinely, and you can overcome a lot of other mistakes.

I did learn from the other mistakes; for the Centurion 50km last weekend, I paced it so much better and ate and drank as regularly as a metronome, from the start. But I still reckon the best learning from my virtual 50-miler is about the power of mental commitment, of genuinely wanting to complete something.

And the best learning from 2020 running was what a gift running is, giving us strength in the tough times and joy and fun the rest of the time.

Bonus lesson from doing a virtual 50-miler from your mum's: If she lives in a bungalow, you will bless the fact there are no stairs to go down the next day.

Can't finish without a thank you to everyone in the Club who kept us all motivated, communicating and sane last year. Thank you. The whole pandemic has been an ultramarathon but hopefully the finish line has stopped moving now...? I've loved our virtual events; they have been a focus and a way to be together apart but, like everyone, can't wait for our group runs to begin again!



HALLOWEEN 100: KEEP GOING WHEN THE PLAN GOES WRONG

(Or “Think of The T-Shirt”) (by Debra Bourne)

It's a rule in marathons and even more in ultras: don't try anything new on race day. No new shoes or even socks; no new clothes; no nutrition that you've not tried before. Nothing. Everything should be tried out in training to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

That's fine in principle, but there are times when it breaks down. How do you test a strategy for a 100 when the problem you're trying to solve doesn't occur in shorter races or training events? I've been incredibly lucky (so far!) with not being prone to many of the common problems encountered by ultrarunners, such as blisters. However, I had discovered that my stomach and guts, apparently fine on races up to 50 or 60 miles, don't really like the 86 or 100-mile events.

I wanted to try out a new nutrition strategy, but the only way to test it was to use it in a 100-mile race – and risk it going very wrong.

The Halloween 100 was a good event to use for this. I had entered it partly for the amazing T-shirt and partly as a back-up if I still needed another chance at sub-24 hours. I had not only met the sub-24 goal at the Autumn 100 but exceeded it very nicely with 23:08, so I had nothing to prove at the Halloween 100. My coach had suggested that I should just go out there and enjoy it (I recognise that for many people '100-mile race' and 'enjoy' don't belong in the same sentence), and having run the Autumn 100 only three weeks earlier that seemed like a good strategy.

The event, with Saxons, Vikings and Normans, was being held at Samphire Hoe, the same venue at which I had run the SVN Samphire 100 in 2019 with insanely high wind speeds (clocked at a local weather station as topping 60mph on the Saturday and >80mph on the Sunday morning). With two weeks to go before Halloween, the weather forecast looked very good: mild temperatures, light winds and dry. Amazing. A week later it was looking not so great but still okay: the wind speeds were forecast to rise a bit and it looked like we would have some rain early on Sunday morning: not too bad. By two days before, it was becoming evident that the weather fairies were not going to be kind to us. We now had high winds, gusting up to 40mph, forecast for considerable parts of both Saturday and Sunday, as well as rain due at some point.

Given the COVID restrictions we were encouraged to use our cars as our personal aid stations if we could do so, although there was a small (open to the elements) area for bags if someone didn't have a car on site, and water, drinks and a limited range of snacks (e.g. bags of crisps) were available at the end of each lap. I planned to drive myself down and to have a snooze after finishing before driving myself back, so I would have the whole car available. I filled it with everything but the kitchen sink. Multiple waterproof jackets; windproof and waterproof trousers in addition to running tights that I could pull on over my shorts. Several warm tops. Changes of shoes and socks. Peaked caps and beanies. Gloves. My KitBrix with all sorts of bits and pieces I might want, from caffeine tablets to first aid kit.

Then there was the food, with an array of sweets, energy balls, chopped melon and watermelon, bananas, salted boiled potatoes, hot cross buns, instant noodles... In addition to ready-filled soft bottles of water, I also had a 5-litre pump-action hot water flask, a mug and a choice of tea bags.

On arrival we were directed to park in the area known as the 'wasteground' – an overflow carpark used for these events, and not a bad location for cars as aid stations, as we would pass by twice on every loop. I parked so the boot would be in the lee of the wind.



The boot of my car stuffed with everything I might need. Jackets & trousers on the parcel shelf

No mass start of course, so I got myself ready, made sure I knew exactly what was where in the car, and set off. We would be running two different loops: first, seven long loops, each 6.55 miles, to reach about 45 miles. These would be partly within Samphire Hoe, then through the wasteland, up and out through the tunnel to the top of the cliffs and along a cycle path to a turn-around point marked with two signs and of course, this being SVN, a traffic cone. Back along, down the tunnel, back through the wasteland and back on the route to the start. The remainder of the time would be on a shorter loop, 3.28 miles, entirely within Samphire Hoe, so very safe even in the dark.

The long loops

It was quite breezy even down in Samphire Hoe. Unexpectedly there was a tail-wind pushing up through the tunnel, so I decided to see if I could run the whole tunnel, and I did (on every lap). Then out onto the cycle path, where the wind could really hit us.

After only about half a mile the gusts were getting strong enough that I feared for my beloved trusty Comrades hat. Just as I started to reach for it to take it off, a gust caught it and sent it tumbling behind me – and sideways into a field. The fence was sheep netting topped by a couple of strands of taut barbed wire. Not inviting, but I couldn't see a gate anywhere and I really didn't want to lose that hat. So, as carefully as possible, using one of the large fence posts with leaners as a support, I climbed over. I thought I was doing okay until I felt a liquid trickling sensation and looked down to see a thin rivulet of blood making its way down my

right leg. Oh well! I made it over the fence and grabbed the hat. Then I had to get back again. The leaners were on the path side of the fence, less easy to use when climbing, so this would be harder. Thankfully two other runners stopped and offered to help. With one of them holding my hat and the other providing an extra support for me to hold onto, I made it back over without further injury. Mopping up the blood from the couple of scratches on my knee, I stuffed the hat into my bag and set off again on the undulating path.



Following the cones down through the 'wasteland' area, then up the ramp to the tunnel



**The sturdy fencepost that was handy for climbing over to retrieve my beloved Comrades hat.
The field had horses in – just visible on the skyline**

Not far before the turn-around point, the path passes by an amazing concrete structure: a sound mirror. The sound mirrors were part of an early warning system for detecting enemy aircraft and this one, the Abbott's cliff sound mirror, was built in 1928. Although SVN holds events using the upper path a couple of times a year, this was the first time I'd taken part in one, so on this first lap I braved the winds to push onto the seaward side and take photos. The winds were really strong and gusty, and I was glad to rejoin the path on the other side and continue to the two signs marking the turn-around point. Round, back – now with the wind behind me. Past the mirror and I was nearly blown across the path – the large structure was playing havoc with airflow and creating horrible turbulence.

Normally a tail wind is great. However, this was strong enough and gusty enough that it felt dangerous on the downhill sections, threatening to push me (and other runners) across the path and into the barbed wire fences.

Back down through the tunnel, trotting and leaning into the wind. At the car I stopped and wiped at the blood on my leg, but it had already dried, so I left it. Back to the start, make sure my lap had been recorded, turn around and repeat. I stopped at the car for more water, to

eat a couple of salted potatoes and some melon and watermelon, and to restock the sweets to eat along the way. Someone crewing for one of the other runners wanted to chat – which was pleasant, but I really wanted to stuff food into my face and leave quickly.



The cycle path along the tops of the cliffs – this is also part of the North Downs Way, as I realised when passing a signpost marked with a National Path acorn



The sound mirror, seen here on the seaward side, caused horrible turbulence in the strong wind. The photo of me was taken very early – I still had my Comrades cap on

Back up through the tunnel and along the cliffs. The winds were stronger, and I found it really difficult to keep my feet in the turbulence around the sound mirror – nor was I the only one having difficulties. There was a woman even smaller than me who was really being pushed around. Back again, past the wind mirror – I was really feeling unhappy by now going through the turbulence – back along the top path, taking care not to let the wind send my flying on the downhills, as it would be a short flight and a hard landing. Back down the tunnel, past the car again, grabbing a bit more melon, and through Samphire Hoe, to be counted off as having completed two laps. Turn around and out again.



Heading back towards the sound mirror, and further along towards Dover

Part way along the cycle path I caught up with Barry, a runner I knew from many previous events, who was walking on the flats as well as the uphills, because of an injury, and we had a nice chat as we went. His walking speed is pretty fast, and although I was running some sections that he was walking, we ended up together near the sound mirror. As we approached the zone of turbulence I said: 'Can we link arms along here please?' He agreed and we were both really pleased to have the extra stability that provided. I made sure I didn't get too far ahead of him on the rest of the way out to the turn-around, so we could link up again on the way back past the mirror.



During the periods when the weather was good, the route was pleasant

Back at the car I ate a hot cross bun and some more melon, stocked up on pretzel sticks, raisins and sweets, and continued, with a brief stop at the toilets as well. Barry had got ahead of me, and I ended up catching him up again just before the sound mirror, so we repeated our double-act.

Setting out on lap 4, I was thankfully only about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away from my car when the rain started, and didn't get too wet before I was able to grab one of my waterproof running jackets. Up the tunnel again, and emerging to turn into the wind, with the rain being driven

into my face. I was wearing a cap under my hood, but the wind gusts kept knocking it sideways off my head inside the hood. On the plus side, the rain washed all the blood off my leg!

The rain stopped part way through lap six, and while I was completing the last long lap we were in lovely sunshine, although the shadows were lengthening. A last time down through the tunnel, and back through Samphire Hoe.

Seven long laps and 45.85 miles done, in a little under 10 hours. Now there were a further 16 and a half short laps to go. I had come planning to enjoy rather than to push the speed, but still had had a sneaking hope that I would finish in under 24 hours. With the wind slowing me down, I reached 50 miles at nearly 11 hours. While I would have preferred to reach that point by 10 hours or thereabouts, theoretically the sub-24 might still be possible, particularly as the wind had dropped.

Food input – and output...

It has been said that 100-mile races are won or lost by runners' ability to eat and drink while maintaining high speeds. Nausea, vomiting, inability to eat are all described in books by and about top ultrarunners. So far that's not been a problem for me. However, on previous 100-mile events, and on the Ridgeway 86, in the later stages of the races my stomach had felt quite uncomfortable and I had reason to believe I had some gastric bleeding (further details are probably TMI for most readers – ask me if you really want to know).

In the hope that 'real' food would provide a protective cushion, I had decided to spend this race eating much more solid food than usual, rather than getting my energy mostly from Kendal mint cake (a bar of sugar, glucose syrup and peppermint oil), vegan sweets, raisins and pretzel sticks. I generally liked fruit at aid stations, so I had prepared pieces of melon and watermelon, as well as bananas, and I had brought boiled new potatoes, dusted with salt, plus a couple of packets of hot cross buns, as well as instant noodles to make and eat during the night. Every loop, and sometimes twice per loop, as I passed my car, I would grab some 'real' food, as well as periodically refilling my bags of sweets etc. to carry with me. I also made a mug of tea using the hot water in the flask, and drank a few mouthfuls each time I stopped. And sometime in the night I added water to my noodles, then ate them during the next couple of times that I passed the car.

During the night, the inevitable consequence of the greater than usual bulk of input began to be felt. And something, whether the caffeine I was taking to stay awake, or something else, started to irritate my bladder. There were two sets of toilets available: the proper indoor toilets at the visitor centre by the start/finish of each lap, and a couple of portaloos in the car park that we passed twice on each loop. Initially I was nipping into the main loos at the end of each of the long laps. Then at the end of each of the short laps. Later I was stopping at the portaloos as well. It was very frustrating, knowing I was losing time at each stop.

Fighting the sleepies

I also started to find myself getting quite sleepy. During the two previous 100-mile races in 2020, as well as the South Downs Way 100 and Ridgeway 86 in 2019, I had found that caffeine tablets really helped me to stay awake. This time they didn't work so well. Unlike the previous two 100-milers, I hadn't managed to get several early nights in the week before this one, and I suspect that really made a difference. It wasn't as bad as during my first 100-mile race in 2018, but the car started looking more and more inviting, pauses for tea got longer, and I did take one nap of 5 or 10 minutes.

Fighting the weather

After a few hours of good weather, the wind returned, and the rain. It was cold enough that I sat on newspapers on the back seat of the car and pulled on my waterproof trousers. Good waterproofs can do a lot to help against the rain. The wind was another matter. It was not as windy down in Samphire Hoe as it had been along the top of the cliffs earlier. However, I started finding it harder and harder to keep running into the wind: after fighting against it so much in the early laps, my legs felt trashed, lacking the power to push against the wind. Part way through the night I stopped trying to run into the wind at all, settling for walking into the wind and trying to jog when going with the wind, although I got slower and slower even when the wind was behind me.

Into the morning

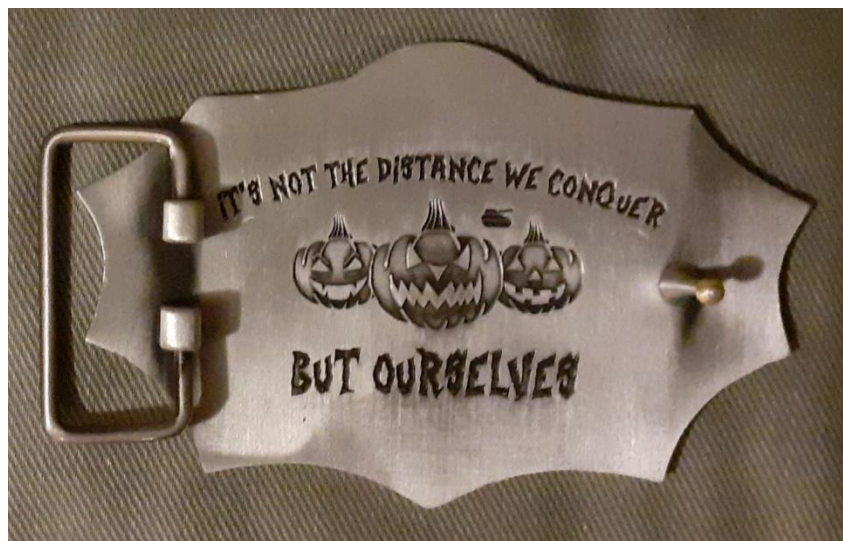
The last few laps the rain decreased but the wind was still quite strong. By now, although I try to treasure every run, and I did enjoy some brief chats with other runners while we ran or walked together (mostly walked), I really wasn't enjoying this one. Even the dawn chorus was not enough to lift my spirits the way it has on previous overnight races.

However, stopping was not an option! I was not going to DNF simply because I was cold and tired and my guts were unhappy. "Think of the T-shirt!" became my mantra as the jogs reduced in length and speed and the walking sections got longer but also, alas, slower. Finally I set out onto the half-lap to finish – although my Garmin had me well over 100 miles already, so I finished on 102.1 miles – what's an extra couple of miles between friends – with a total time of 26:48:49, less than 10 minutes faster than my 2019 Samphire Hoe 100. Strava told me that my moving time was 23:37:22, which shows just how much time I wasted – more than 3 hours – at/in my car/aid station and in the toilets.

Travis handed me my well-earned T-shirt, medal and belt buckle. The reverse of the buckle states that 'It's not the distance we conquer but ourselves' – and that's very true. I do sometimes wonder what keeps me going in races such as this, when all my plans have broken down. I guess sheer stubbornness, knowing that it counts as one more towards my 100 ultras cumulative goal, and not wanting to DNF for the first time – as well as looking forward to earning the T-shirt!



Tired but happy to have finished – and earned that fantastic T-shirt



After a pleasant socially-distanced chat with another recently-finished runner, and a bit to eat and drink, I curled up in my car and had a snooze for a couple of hours, waking in time to cheer some other runners as they finished, before heading home.

Aftermath

Running (or at least completing) two 100-mile races in three weeks took a lot out of me. I had plans for a few shorter events later in the year. The in-person ones were cancelled as COVID restrictions returned. I did manage to complete a 100-mile week in late November (the second Centurion One Community Challenge week) incorporating a 50K, and two further 50K virtual events in December, but I was tired and they were slow. I continued training throughout November and most of December, but my legs felt sluggish, my speeds much slower than earlier in the year. Finally, on 28th December I started a deliberate break from running. Over a period of 18 days, the only run I did was the virtual Addington 4 on New Year's Day. In retrospect, I should have taken that break earlier. Live and learn!

CHRISTMAS PARKRUN – YOU COULD HAVE RUN IT !!

(by Stephen Tyler)

Cometh the 25th December, cometh the Christmas Day parkrun although 2020 it was more like cometh not the Christmas Day parkrun. Nevertheless, being the only “ever present” as far as I am aware (as Alan Purchase told me back in 2018), it just had to be done.

The previous seven days had produced prodigious amounts of precipitation and Lloyd Park was at its most playful – but not quite like 2010 when we had the impromptu lake and I finished in the top ten! Sadly, there were only around a dozen who started that day ...

I knew what the course was going to be like, having run it in off-roadsters twenty-four hours earlier and therefore the management decision was to dust off my old football boots – the two new pairs are still needed for refereeing so they stayed out of the way.

Eight days previously, I had refereed a community event on an afternoon when it hammered down and that was the precursor to the week before Christmas turning the course into a quagmire in all the usual places – and a few that you wouldn’t normally expect!

Starting by the café which was closed for a few days for the festivities, the worn out pathway across to the start of the disc golf course was wet, but slightly drier than the Friday, but you could clearly make out the footprints of those who had gone before. Over the short hump, water was running down the track and it was horrible heading slightly upwards alongside the tram tracks and worse after bearing left.

Down the slope to the dog-leg right and going along the worn ground down to the hedge was quite soft and, without studs, it would have been hazardous. Firmer ground awaited alongside the hedge but, on turning left at the disc golf target, the approach to the hill became more treacherous. The 180 degree uphill bend was playful to say the least, Friday’s off-roadsters leaving me slipping and sliding, the moulded studs giving improved traction uphill. Again, as one plateaued, the surface was firmer up to the tree but not when going round to the left. The downhill to the park proper started off okay but became more evil with every step. Then there was the waterlogged, ankle-deep cloying mud as one approached and went through the trees, ensuring copious cold water into the boots and producing a shock to the system and mud-splattered legs.

Back into the view of the non-existent spectators, the top end had a few walkers and their pooches but that long downward slope was a relief. Crossing the tarmac emerging from the direction of Grimwade, a new bad-weather stream appears to have been brought about by the cycle track having diverted a water course. Jumping the stream, into and through the trees, round the bend and down and along to the bowling green. Through my start/finish line to do it all again.

Three things were missing: (i) the challenges of trying to catch the people in front and the corresponding keeping ahead of those behind; (ii) a cup of tea from the café at the end; and (iii) putting all the equipment away after all the runners had disappeared. This year’s Christmas Day is on a Saturday!!

PS. Who read the parkrun promo in Christmas week’s Croydon Advertiser?

SPEED TRAINING FOR OLDER RUNNERS (by Alan Dolton)

In the December issue of this magazine, I included an article on training for a fast 10-mile or 10-kilometre race, and included the training schedules which I had followed in the build-up to recording my fastest times for each of these distances. I recognise that, while those schedules may well be suitable for runners in their 20s or 30s, they are probably too hard for most runners over the age of 45, and I have had a request to write a similar article focusing on older runners.

The first point which I would like to make is that runners, like cars, should be judged not solely on their chronological age but also on the number of miles they have 'on the clock'. Runners who trained very hard in their youth and have already run 80,000 miles or more are likely to have incurred significant wear and tear on their ligaments and tendons, and to finish behind runners of similar natural ability who have only been running for five or six years, but have built up their training steadily over those years. I am only too well aware of this, as I now find myself regularly finishing behind runners of a similar age who have either returned to running after a long break, or have started serious running later in life (often after a background of cycling or playing football). One example of a runner who started running late in life but has had great success in Masters' races is Angela Copson, who began running in 2006, aged 58, to train for a marathon. In 2018 she won the W70 1500 metres and 5000 metres at the World Masters Championships. An earlier example is the late Josie Waller, who started running at 62. At the 1997 World Masters Championships she won the W75 5000 metres in 26 minutes 22.55 seconds, which is still the British W75 record.



Angela Copson

Another example of very experienced runners being beaten by runners who have started later in life is afforded by our neighbouring club, South London Harriers. They have a very strong veterans' section, and in the Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships in

October 2018, they had five of the first eight finishers in the over-60 race. Two of these five, Barry Attwell and Ray Marriott, had been outstanding runners in the 1970s and 1980s: Barry had run 10000 metres in 30 minutes 20.6 while Ray had run the distance in 31 minutes 30.4. Yet neither of them managed to win medals in that 2018 race: they were both beaten by three of their club colleagues who had started serious running much later. SLH provide an even more striking example in the late Gordon Pirie, who was English cross-country champion for three successive years (1953-1955) and finished second in the 1956 Olympic 5000 metres. Pirie continued racing into his fifties, but by the time he was in his mid-fifties he was finishing behind runners whom he would have beaten quite easily 30 years earlier. And a similar example is provided by Ron Hill, the 1969 European marathon champion who had run 10000 metres in 28 minutes 38 seconds. He was still competing as an M75 in 2014, but his best time that year was 55 minutes 34, which placed him 33rd in the British M75 rankings, several minutes behind runners whose lifetime bests were much slower than his. In 2018, not long after his 80th birthday, he ran the Hyde parkrun in 41 minutes 16, which placed him 245th in the British M80 parkrun rankings for that year (the leading M80, David Spencer of Barrow, ran a highly impressive 25 minutes 15).

Having said that, I would suggest that the training schedule for a masters athlete who is hoping to run a fast time at 5000 metres or 10000 metres should follow the standard principles of a regular long run (the club's Sunday runs are a good way of doing this); a regular session aimed to improve a runner's oxygen uptake (such as our Tuesday track sessions, where the reps usually total 4000 metres); one session each week aimed to improve a runner's speed and technique (such as our Thursday track sessions, where the reps usually total no more than 1500 metres) and a regular 'tempo run' designed to improve a runner's lactate threshold (parkruns are a good opportunity for this, when available). Ideally I would suggest that an ambitious masters athlete should try to do each of these sessions on a weekly basis, although some runners with other commitments, or older runners who take longer to recover from hard sessions, may find this difficult and may get better results by doing the lactate threshold session and/or the long run fortnightly rather than weekly. On the subject of recovery, when I first joined Striders I had no difficulty in doing the Wednesday club run at a reasonable pace after a hard track session the previous day. As I approached my 60th birthday it took me longer to recover from hard track sessions and I began to find the Wednesday runs, particularly the hillier routes, increasingly difficult. I eventually stopped doing the club Wednesday runs just after reaching the age of 60.

Because my own performances in the older age-groups have been much less impressive than the times which I was recording in the 1980s, I am somewhat hesitant about reproducing my own training schedules for any point in the last 20 years. Most Striders will be familiar with the concept of 'age-grading'. Using the standard age-grading tables, my best performance since reaching the age of 40 was in 1997, when I ran 1500 metres in 4 minutes 30.62 seconds for an age-grading of 80.6%. I did this in the Southern Counties Veterans Championships in early August. My initial target for the season had been the 1500 metres at the Surrey Veterans Championships, which had taken place in May and which I had managed to win in 4 minutes 32.1. This was my first individual Surrey gold medal, and I subsequently entered both the 1500 and 5000 metres at the Southern Counties Veterans Championships, not expecting a medal but hoping that I might be pulled round to a relatively fast time. My training in the three weeks prior to these championships was as follows:

12 Jul 5 miles including 6 x 100m strides
13 Jul 10 x 150m (50m slow jog recovery)
14 Jul 5 miles including 6 x 100m strides
15 Jul 6 x 200m (200m jog recovery)
16 Jul Rosenheim League 1500m. 7th in 4 minutes 32.8.
17 Jul 8 x 250m (150m jog recovery)
18 Jul AM weights; PM 4 miles slow

19 Jul Rest (track judging at Women's League match)
 20 Jul AM 6 x 250m (150m walk recovery); PM 6 miles slow
 21 Jul 4 miles slow
 22 Jul 2 sets of 1 x 1000m (200m jog); 1 x 500m (250m jog); 1 x 250m (5 mins walk between sets)
 23 Jul 6 miles slow
 24 Jul 5 miles including 5 x 100m strides
 25 Jul weights
 26 Jul Southern League 1500m race. 10th in 4 minutes 35.5.
 27 Jul 7 miles slow
 28 Jul 5 miles slow
 29 Jul 4 miles slow
 30 Jul 1 mile race. 2nd in 4 minutes 56.3 (outsprinted by Andy Del Nevo)
 31 Jul 6 x 400m differentials with first 300m steady, last 100m fast (200m jog recovery)
 1 Aug weights

My principal track sessions were set by the late Andy Glover, who had coached me for several years, and were done with the late Martin Walmsley (who had run 31 minutes 50 for 10000 metres and died in 2011, aged only 55).

On the day of the championships, I was surprised to find that the 1500 metre field seemed rather weak, with only eight runners. We covered the first 800 metres in a rather modest 2 minutes 28. I took the lead just before the bell and was still in front with 200 metres to go, but was predictably outsprinted by Ken Daniel of Blackheath. I finished second in a season's best of 4 minutes 30.62 seconds, gaining an unexpected but very welcome silver medal. Looking at the programme, I was also surprised to find that the field for the 5000 metres, which took place the following day, seemed even weaker. It looked as if my main rival would be Des Michael of Barnet. Sure enough, he took the lead soon after the start and began to churn out laps of 84 seconds. I tucked in behind him and was pleasantly surprised to find that by the 3000 metre mark, which we reached in a modest 10 minutes 31, we were clear of the rest of the field. Des increased the pace with three laps to go but I stayed close behind him until the final 300 metres, when I overtook him and sprinted as hard as I could. My last 200 metres was timed at 32 seconds and I won the race in 17 minutes 08. It seemed a very slow time with which to win a Southern title, but I was very pleased to win and thought that I had run a sensible tactical race. Incidentally Des is still competing and has slowed much less than I have: if we had a rematch today, he would definitely beat me!

The following season was a disappointing one, as I tried to defend both my titles, but only managed to place third in the Surrey Veterans 1500 metre championship, and fourth in the Southern Counties Veterans 5000 metre championship. On age-grading, my best performance for the season was 80.5%, which I achieved in a Southern League 5000 metre race against younger athletes. At the end of the track season I joined Striders in order to prepare for my first marathon. I have never run as well since: with the benefit of hindsight, the extra mileage which I had to run in order to train for a marathon appears to have permanently blunted my speed. While many runners will want to run a marathon at some point in their careers, it is not compulsory to do so; and it is interesting to note that former Strider David Batten, who still holds the club's M55 3000 metre record (as well as a couple of our M50 track records), started running relatively late after a background as a cyclist, and never ran a marathon.

Older runners vary in how quickly they recover from hard races and training sessions, which is why I am particularly wary of appearing to prescribe a 'one size fits all' schedule. But I would be very happy to help any Striders, whatever their age, who are seriously interested in improving their performances at 10000 metres and shorter distances.

BOOK REVIEW – FROM LAST TO FIRST

(by Charlie Spedding: reviewed by Alan Dolton)

Charlie Spedding won the bronze medal in the 1984 Olympic Marathon, in Los Angeles. This was the most recent occasion that a British runner has won an Olympic medal in the marathon. He published his autobiography, 'From Last to First' in 2009, 25 years after his Olympic medal. It is both interesting and inspiring. His introduction sets the scene for the book, stating:

"I won a bronze medal in the Olympic marathon, but I was definitely not one of the three most talented distance runners in the world. I was a talented runner compared to the average runner, but you don't run against average runners in an Olympic final."

The first two chapters of the book give an account of the 1984 race, in which he took the lead at 21 miles and managed to break away from everyone except the two runners who finished in front of him (Carlos Lopes of Portugal and John Treacy of Ireland). Following this, the book proceeds in a conventional chronological sequence. Charlie mentions that his first ever race was over 100 yards at his primary school, in which he finished last (hence the title of his book). However, in his first cross-country race he finished second, indicating that he was clearly a natural distance runner rather than a sprinter. In 1970, in the English Schools 1500m championship, he finished second in 3 minutes 48.8. In 1973 he improved his 1500m time to 3 minutes 45.3, and in 1976 he ran 4 minutes 3.5 for a mile.

Charlie's personal best for 800 metres was 1 minute 56.7. This is of course faster than Striders' club record, but it is relatively modest by comparison with his personal best for 1500 metres. His best 800 metre pace was 58 seconds per lap whereas his best 1500 metre pace was 60 seconds per lap: this is an unusually small differential, particularly compared with our top 1500 metre runners such as Steve Ovett, Seb Coe and Steve Cram.

In 1982 he placed third in the AAA 10000 metre championship, and was selected at 10000 metres for both the European Championships and the Commonwealth Games. Remarkably, he recorded the same time of 28 minutes 25 in both races, placing fourth in the Commonwealths and eighth in the Europeans. In the following year he won the AAA 10000 metre championship in a personal best of 28 minutes 08, having broken away from the field with three laps to go.

He then decided to move up to the marathon, observing that "national champion at 10000m I might have been, but a fast finisher I would never be" and that even if he had gained selection for the Olympic 10000 metres, his lack of a fast finish meant that he would be in danger of being eliminated in the heats. He made his marathon debut in Houston in January 1984. He lost sight of the leaders after 16 miles, but maintained a consistent pace and caught them with just over a mile left, going on to win in 2 hours 11 minutes 54.

Three months later he ran his second marathon, in London. He adopted similar tactics, and lost sight of the leaders after 10 miles. However he caught them after 18 miles and took the lead just before the 20-mile mark, going on to win in 2 hours 09 minutes 57. This gained him selection for the Olympic Marathon where (as described in the opening chapters of the book) he finished third.

He had another good run to finish second to Steve Jones in the 1985 London Marathon, but his form subsequently declined. He dropped out after 19 miles of the 1986 Commonwealth Games Marathon, and in 1987 he had to have surgery on an Achilles tendon injury. Despite only finishing tenth in the 1988 London Marathon, he was selected for the Olympic Marathon

later that year. He finished sixth in 2 hours 12, commenting that that was a better performance than his training and previous races had suggested. He never finished another marathon: he was unable to run in the 1989 or 1990 London Marathons because of injury, and had to drop out of the 1990 Fukuoka Marathon with a bad calf injury.

I found chapter 12 of Charlie's book, entitled 'progress of training', particularly interesting. He observes that in his early years, he did not do any speed work in the winter, but he improved significantly after he began doing speed sessions all year round, and that keeping his muscles attuned to the extra stress of faster running "resulted in less stiffness and fewer injuries". In his marathon preparation, he regularly did 15-mile runs at a hard pace, explaining that "I had to get used to maintaining a brisk pace over an extended distance, and I ran intuitively at a pace that was brisk, but sustainable, for 15 miles. To run like that for 20 miles would be too hard, and to run for 10 miles would lack relevance for the marathon."

He also comments that he suffered from persistent Achilles tendon injuries, and that it was not realised at the time that these were caused by tight calf muscles. He observes that "my tendons were sore, so my tendons were treated, but it didn't work well because the real problems were tightness and scar tissue in my calf muscles. The reduced mobility in my calves transferred the stress to my tendons, making them sore. Modern treatment would involve massage deep into the muscle to break down the tightness and scar tissue, which would relieve the pressure on the tendon."

Discussing his medal-winning performance in Los Angeles, Charlie comments that "it was always the really big races that motivated me most. It was always at the top events that my inner caterpillar turned into a butterfly. I ran all my best races when I was able to peak both physically and mentally. When I peaked successfully, I knew I would beat people who might normally beat me. The ability to peak correctly gives runners like me the chance to step up from our normal level to something much greater."

The book ends with an appendix giving full details of Charlie's training between winning the London Marathon in May 1984 and placing third in the Olympics three months later. He took two days' rest after the London Marathon, and then did two weeks of steady or easy running. He resumed normal training with a 15-mile run 15 days after London, and did a track session (of 6 x 1000 metres) the following day. Five weeks after London he did one of his hardest regular track sessions, consisting of 5 x 1 mile in 4 minutes 40, jogging a lap in 90 seconds as recovery. This session totals 10000 metres and Charlie ran the session, including the recovery jogs, in just under 31 minutes.

Charlie's highest weekly mileage was 107 miles, and he had four more weeks of between 101 and 104 miles. He did at least one track session each week, apart from one week in which he did two interval sessions on the road. His longest run was a 28-miler, which he ran three weeks before the Olympic Marathon, and his last long run was an 18-miler which he ran two weeks before the Olympic Marathon. He then began to taper, although he still did a track session (of 6 x 800m) eleven days before the Olympic Marathon, and another track session (of 5 x 400m) four days before the Olympic Marathon. His reps for the 5 x 400m session averaged 60.9 seconds, so his marathon training had not blunted his speed too much.

Although Charlie was obviously competing at a much higher level than any Striders can aspire to, I found this an inspiring and very readable book, and I would strongly recommend it to other Striders.

(This article originally appeared in the September 2015 club magazine, but is republished here – in a slightly revised form – for the benefit of newer Striders)



**The battle for silver and bronze medals in the 1984 Olympic marathon:
Charlie Spedding chases John Treacy of Ireland**

STRIDERS IN THE NATIONAL RANKINGS

The 2020 track season was of course interrupted by the national lockdown and the subsequent restrictions on competition. All the usual track leagues were cancelled for the year, as were several championship events such as the Surrey Masters Championships. Nevertheless, a few Striders did manage to compete in some track events, and some of them emerged with a higher position in the national rankings than they might have expected.

This year, our most highly ranked athlete was Lorraine Hunte, who competed at 60 metres in the British Masters Indoor Championships in early March. She placed fifth in the W65 race, and her time was only beaten by one other athlete during the year, so she finished the season ranked sixth in the W65 age-group.

In the W60 age-group, Sandra Francis did well to win two bronze medals in the British Masters Indoor Championships. In the British W60 rankings for the year, her performances ranked her eighth at 60 metres and eleventh in the long jump.

Another of Striders' women to feature in the national rankings was Nikki Javan, who placed 19th in the W40 age-group at 3000 metres. This was the first time that Nikki has placed in the British top twenty.

None of Striders' men could match the achievements of our three leading women, but there were still some reasonable performances, with three of our men achieving a placing in the top 50, and two more making the top 70. In the M50 age-group, Steve Massey was ranked 35th at 800 metres (and was also 54th at 3000 metres). In the M60 age-group, Alan Dolton was 40th at 1500 metres. In the M55 age-group, Peter Johnson was 46th at 3000 metres. In the M40 age-group, Andrew Aitken was 61st at 3000 metres. In the M45 age-group, Steve Starvis was 68th at 3000 metres.

It is clearly more difficult to score a high placing in the national senior rankings, because they cover a 15-year spread (from age 20 to 34) whereas the older age-groups only cover a five-year spread. However James Rhodes did well to rank 121st in Britain at 5000 metres.

Some of our athletes who have ranked very highly in previous years did not compete on the track in 2020. These include Rachel Lindley, who in 2019 was ranked third in Britain in the W35 age-group at the mile. This appears to be the highest placing any Strider has ever achieved in the national track and field rankings. Others who did not compete in 2020 include Paul Cripps, who in 2017 was fifth in the M50 age-group at the high jump, and Kevin Burnett, who in 2019 was ninth in the British M80 rankings at the hammer. I hope that these three, along with several other Striders, will be able to return to track competition in 2021.



Lorraine Hunte (no 66) competing in a Veterans League match in 2017

25 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SPRING 1996

During the early months of 1996, the saga of the change of Striders' club name continued. The Surrey AA had angered most Striders by refusing to accept the club's application to change the name from 'Philips City Striders' to 'Croydon Striders', on the grounds that it would cause confusion with local rivals Croydon Harriers. Striders' club secretary Nigel Davidson persuaded both Croydon Harriers and the Surrey AA to agree to the club being named 'South Croydon Striders', and the March 1996 edition of the club newsletter, edited by Stuart Driver, duly bore this name. However the Striders committee, by a narrow majority, declined to ratify this concession. Nigel eventually secured the agreement of the Striders' committee to a proposal that the club should be named 'Striders of Croydon' rather than 'Croydon Striders'. And that is how we got our rather distinctive name.

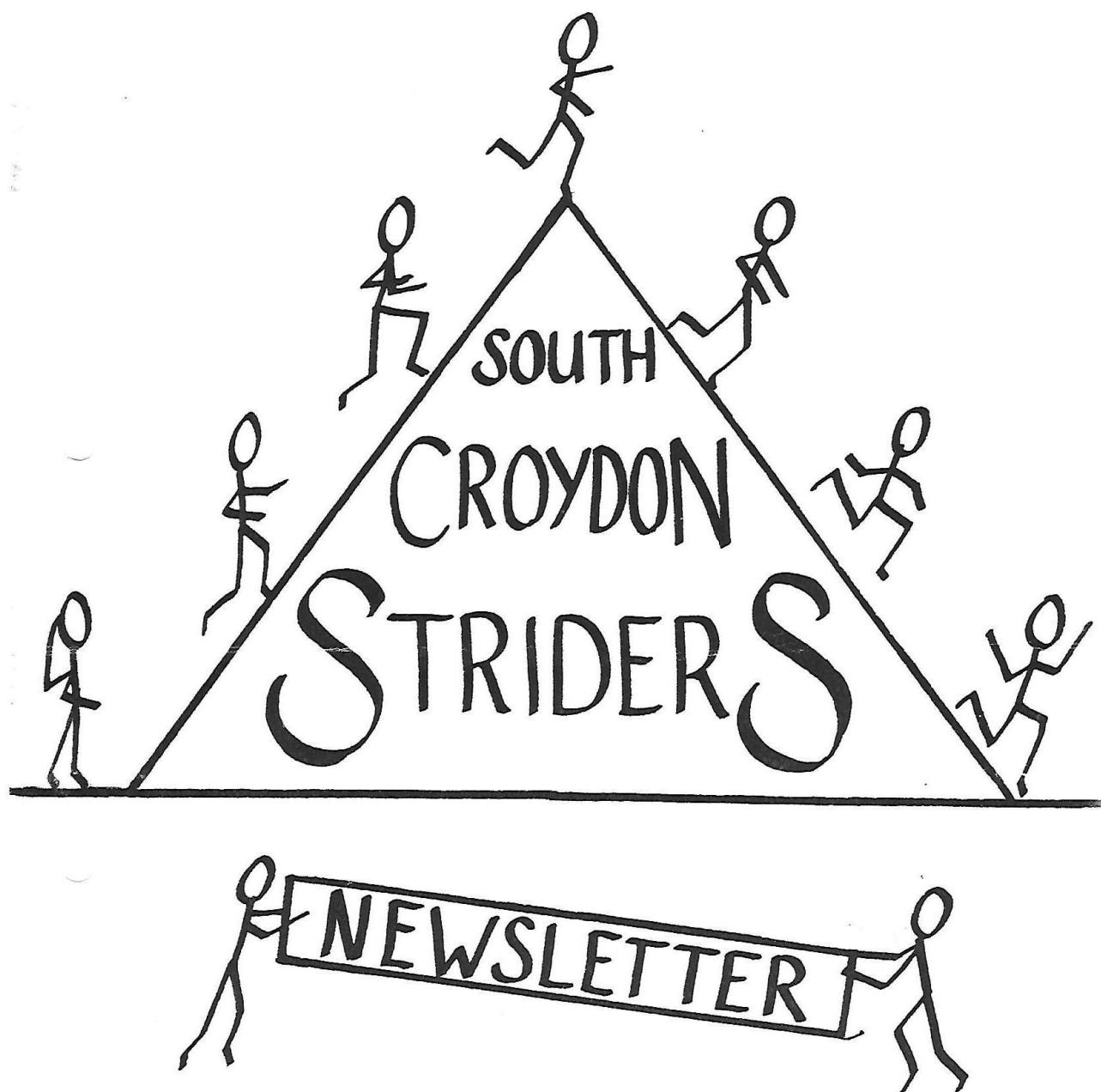
The East Surrey League held its annual road relay on the traditional course at Box Hill on 16 March. Local club Box Hill Racers gained a convincing win, while their B team placed second with Crawley third. Striders' A team finished sixth, but were disqualified because Lee Morgan ran both the first and last legs after a selected runner failed to arrive. (Ironically, Striders had a complete B team, and would have placed eighth if the fastest B team runner had been promoted to the A team to replace the absent runner.)

The East Surrey League held its annual road race at Ewell on 9 April. The race was won by Paul Haywood of Box Hill Racers. The first Strider was Lee Morgan, who placed ninth in 23 minutes 17. Box Hill won the team race with Dorking second. Striders finished fifth, one place ahead of local rivals Croydon Harriers. Dorking won the league championship.

The tenth Croydon 10K, which had been postponed at short notice in October 1995, was held on 14 April. This was the first race to be held on the current course, as increased traffic following the introduction of Sunday trading meant that it was no longer considered safe to allow runners to cross Park Hill Road. The winner was Stuart Major of South London Harriers in 31 minutes 39. Former Strider Simon Morris was the first over-50, recording 36 minutes 02, which would have been a club over-50 record if he had retained his club membership.

1996 saw Striders enter a track and field league for the first time, competing in the Southwest London division of the Southern Veterans' League. Striders' first match was at Kingsmeadow on 29 April. Striders' men made an excellent start, having the satisfaction of beating local rivals Croydon Harriers (who were of course an established track and field club) by just one point. Home club Kingston won the match with 228 points, themselves just one point ahead of second-placed Epsom. Dorking placed third with 173 points, while Striders' total of 125 saw them ahead of Harriers' 124. Sutton were sixth (101) with Redhill seventh and Crawley eighth. Striders' victory over Harriers was largely due to having better team spirit: spurred on by team captain John McGilvray, the club fielded athletes in most of the events whereas Harriers had several gaps. One particularly notable Striders performance came from Don Kayum, who ran the 100 metres in 12.8 seconds, which remained the Striders over-40 record for twenty years before being beaten by Sam O'Dongo in 2016. Striders' women had a smaller team but still placed fifth: none of Croydon Harriers' women managed to make the journey to Kingsmeadow.

The second Southern Veterans' League match of the season was at Croydon Arena on 13 May. Both Striders' men and women again had the satisfaction of beating local rivals Croydon Harriers. Striders' men placed fourth with 150 points, only 10 points behind third-placed Dorking.



March 1996

Editor - Stuart Driver

A collector's item: the only issue of the club newsletter / magazine
to appear with this short-lived name

20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SPRING 2001

Several Striders competed in the Eastleigh 10 kilometre road race on 18 March. Tony Sheppard led us home in 34 minutes 28, and was followed by John Kirby (37:10) and Alan Dolton (37:51). John McGilvray finished strongly to set a club over-55 record of 37 minutes 55 (which has subsequently been beaten by Matthew Stone).

The 20th Croydon 10K took place on 8 April. Stuart Major of South London Harriers was a convincing winner in 31 minutes 04. Richard Shipway of Woodstock Harriers was second in 32 minutes 55. The first woman was Debbie Percival of Medway who placed ninth overall in 35 minutes 10. The first Strider to finish was Neil Furze who placed 14th in 36 minutes 32. Dave Shaw was 16th in a lifetime best 36 minutes 41, while Bob Ewen placed 21st in 37 minutes 09.

In April 2001 Mick Gambrill organised a club trip to Cape Town in South Africa for the very scenic (but very hilly) Two Oceans 56-kilometre ultra-marathon. Nine Striders made the trip, although only three of them tackled the 56-kilometre race: the other six settled for the half-marathon which was held in conjunction. Our first finisher in the 56-kilometre race was Jane Lansdown, while the other Striders to tackle the full distance were Mick and Barbara Gambrill. The trip was of course memorable for the sightseeing as well as the running.

The 21st London Marathon was held on 22 April. Striders' first man home was Tony Sheppard who recorded 2 hours 55 minutes 03 seconds, finishing just ten seconds ahead of Dave Shaw. Oloff Van Zyl, who had moved to Edinburgh during the year, made his final appearance for Striders with 2 hours 59 minutes 01, while club chairman Nigel Davidson ran 3 hours 03 minutes 00. Our first woman home was Diane Ballard (now Diane Osborn) who ran a lifetime best of 3 hours 22 minutes 07, while Kate Potter (now Kate Custis) ran 3 hours 24 minutes 06.

May 2001 was an important month for Striders, as we moved our headquarters from the old CASSAC building in the south-west corner of Lloyd Park to Addiscombe Cricket Club's ground at Sandilands. Newer members may have taken the changing and showering facilities at Sandilands for granted, but they were a significant improvement on what we had endured at CASSAC (particularly for our women). The move also required significant revisions to some of our training routes for our Wednesday evening road runs.

The first Southern Veterans' League match of the season was at Kingsmeadow on 2 May. Our women finished fourth while our men were fifth. John McGilvray set two club over-55 records, recording 14.2 seconds for the 100 metres and 4.02 metres for the long jump. (His 100 metre record still stands, although his long jump has subsequently been beaten by David Gunaratnam.) Linda Daniel and Lyn Simmons both showed excellent team spirit by competing in four different events.

The second Southern Veterans' League match of the season was at Kingsmeadow on 14 May. Our women finished third while our men were fifth. Kate Potter won the women's discus and was second in both the 200 metres and 800 metres. Paula Bongers was second in the 3000 metres, with Lyn Simmons second in the B race. For our men, Nigel Davidson was second in the triple jump with a club over-40 record of 9 metres 97 (which has subsequently been beaten by Paul Cripps).

The Surrey Veterans' Championships were held at Kingsmeadow on 26 May. For Striders, Kevin Burnett set a club over-60 shot putt record of 6 metres 62, while Alan Dolton placed second in the over-40 1500 metres in 4 minutes 55.2.



Striders in South Africa in April 2001. Back row (left to right): Barbara Gambrill, Jane Lansdown, Michele Lawrence, Ron Carver, Simon Smith. Front row: Alan Dolton, John McGilvray (photo by Mick Gambrill)



Striders after the 2001 London Marathon. Left to right: Alan Dolton, Nigel Davidson, Kate Potter, John Gannon, Diane Ballard, Chris Morton, Tony Sheppard

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SPRING 2011

Striders produced a respectable team performance to finish fifth in the East Surrey League's annual road relay at Box Hill on 12 March. Mick Turner gave us a solid start on the first leg, finishing sixth of the 26 starters and covering the 2.1 mile course in 12 minutes 30 seconds. Barry White maintained Striders' challenge by running the second leg in 13 minutes 03, and on the third leg club secretary Chris Morton moved up to fifth place, running 13 minutes 41. Steve Starvis held this position on the final leg, running 12 minutes 01.

Lee Flanagan produced a very good run to place tenth in the South of the Thames Cross-Country Championship at Coulsdon on 19 March. Striders' leading marathon runner, Bill Makuwa, produced an excellent run in the Hastings Half-Marathon on the following day. He finished 18th in a large field, recording a personal best 75 minutes 08 seconds. Tina Macenhill ran 1 hour 42 minutes 16, while Kate Custis recorded 1 hour 47 minutes 09. At the Paddock Wood Half-Marathon on 27 March, Cara Kayum recorded a personal best 94 minutes 53 seconds.

The first Croydon Half-Marathon took place on Sunday 3 April, organised by Striders' chairman Robin Jamieson. The race was won by Abdi Madar of Newham, who completed the undulating course in 71 minutes 31, with David White of Croydon Harriers placing second in 75 minutes 30. Striders were led by Steve Starvis, who placed fourth in a personal best 77 minutes 23. Richard Lee-Smith ran well to finish seventh in 80 minutes 38 despite nursing a calf injury, while veteran John Foster ran well to place 13th in 82 minutes 33. Striders' women were led by Karen Stretch who was the 13th woman to finish, placing 96th overall in 1 hour 42 minutes 23.

Striders had 23 finishers in the London Marathon on 17 April. They were led by veteran John Foster, who ran very well to finish in 3 hours 08 minutes 19 seconds. Striders' second man home was Steve Massey, who recorded 3 hours 21 minutes 02. Striders' first woman to finish was Cara Kayum, who had an excellent run to record a personal best 3 hours 28 minutes 06. Suzy Yates was next home in 3 hours 29 minutes 15, while Lesley Bourke also ran well to finish in 3 hours 51 minutes 27. Sue Atkinson had a very good run to set a club over-60 record of 4 hours 50 minutes 31 seconds.

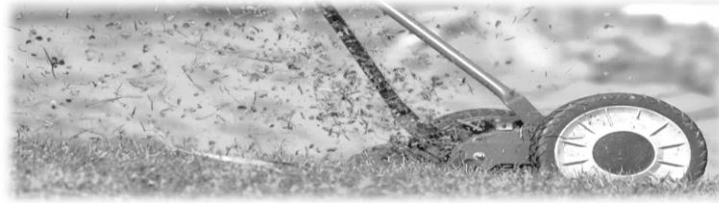
Paul Cripps, who had competed for Croydon Harriers' British League team in the late 1980s, made an excellent debut for Striders in the first Southern Veterans' League match of the season, at Kingsmeadow on 9 May. He placed second in the high jump with 1 metre 45 (which was a club veterans' record, and which he has subsequently improved to 1 metre 60), and also placed third in the long jump (4.38). Bob Ewen gained Striders' only victory, winning the over-50 2000m walk (12:05.7). Richard Lee-Smith ran well to take second place in both the over-35 400 metres (60.2) and 1500 metres (4:44.5). For Striders' women, Kim Ford was second in the over-50 2000 metre walk in 14 minutes 21.0. Both Striders' men and women placed fourth of the six clubs in the match.

Striders' women produced an excellent team performance to place second in the Rosenheim League match at Croydon Arena on 25 May. They finished the meeting on a winning note when the 4 x 200 metre relay team of Sandra Francis, Corinne Carr, Linda Daniel and Natalie Osher sprinted to victory in 2 minutes 34.4 seconds. Earlier in the evening Sandra had placed second in the long jump with a leap of 3 metres 28. Striders' men placed fourth of the six clubs in the match. Their leading scorer was Ernie Hann who competed in six events, placing third in the high jump with a clearance of 1 metre 35. Team captain Lee Flanagan placed third in the 1500 metres (4:40.4) and fourth in the 800 metres (2:09.3).



Steve Starvis was Striders' first finisher in the 2011 Croydon Half-Marathon

AFFORDABLE GARDENING IN THE CROYDON AREA



quality local garden maintenance at a competitive price

lawn mowing & hedge trimming
planting, tidying, weeding and clearing
encouraging nature into your garden
laying paths and paving
ponds : cleaning and maintaining

Providing a quiet and environmentally friendly service, I have lived in the centre of Croydon for 17 years.



phone on 020 86671017

mobile on 07710008939

email chriscroydongardener@gmail.com

website, for rates <https://chriscroydongardener.wordpress.com/>

I am fully insured and CRB/DBS checked

PRIVATE MATHS TUTOR

11+, GCSE, A Level

Need help for you or your children in maths?

One-to-one tuition provided for Key Stage 1 all the way up to A level.

Tuition provided in your home or agreed alternative location.

Contact Simon Ambrosi via details below or see website for further information.

Phone: 07947 536973

Email: admin@heretoteach.co.uk

<http://heretoteach.co.uk/index.html>

Andy's Photos

Sporting and Special events photographs.

These photos make great presents or raffle prizes.

e.g. Chelsea, Manchester United, Crystal Palace.

Athletes such as, Usain Bolt, Jessica Ennis, Mo Farah etc.

Rugby, Tennis, Cycling and many more.

Please email any enquiries to: lorraine@lhunte.wanadoo.co.uk

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

CNHC REGISTERED SPORTS THERAPIST
UK ATHLETICS LEVEL 3 CLUB COACH

TELEPHONE 020 8656 0532

alandolton@yahoo.co.uk

70 WARREN ROAD, ADDISCOMBE, CROYDON, CR0 6PF

<https://www.surreyphysio.co.uk/services/sports-massage/>

DISCOUNTED RATES FOR STRIDERS OF CROYDON

CROYDON SPORTS THERAPY

Sports/Running Injuries?

I OFFER THE FOLLOWING

- **Sports Massage**
- **Kinesiotaping**
- **Exercise Rehab**
- **Strength & Conditioning**
- **Nutritional Advice**

Located at 40-44 St George's Walk, CR0 1YJ

Call 07984 052823 or e-mail bea@myptstudio.co.uk