

Striders of Croydon

JUNE 2023 MAGAZINE



Tatsuya Okamoto ahead of Lee Flanagan in the East Surrey League in Lloyd Park

(photo by Phil Coales)

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 14 June – Rosenheim League – Sutton Arena

Monday 19 June – Southern Veterans League – Sutton Arena

Sunday 25 June – Ranelagh Richmond 10K – Petersham (Surrey Championships & Road League)

Monday 10 July – Southern Veterans League – Wimbledon

Saturday 15 July – Elmore 7 miles – Chipstead (Surrey Road League)

Wednesday 19 July – Rosenheim League – Tooting

Sunday 23 July – Elmbridge 10K – Elmbridge (Surrey Road League)

Friday 28 July – Wedding Day 7K – Bushy Park (Surrey Road League)

Saturday 2 September – British Masters Track & Field Championships – Derby (tbc)

Saturday 9 September – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon Park

Sunday 8 October – British Masters Marathon Championships – Chester

Sunday 15 October – Cabbage Patch 10 miles – Twickenham (Surrey Road League)

Sunday 3 December – British Masters 5K Road Championships – Battersea



Striders at the Southern Veterans League match at Ewell on 22 May

EDITORIAL: JUNE 2023

Welcome to the June issue of our club magazine. We have made a successful start to the Surrey Road League season, with 14 finishers in the Richmond Half-Marathon and 15 in the Sutton 10K. After two matches, our men are placed sixth in the league table (out of 40 clubs), while our women are twelfth. We made a delayed start to the track season, with our first Southern Veterans League match being cancelled at short notice because of torrential rain. However we enjoyed our first Rosenheim League match since 2013, and later in May we had a very good turnout for our Southern Veterans League match at Ewell.

At the start of May, Matthew Stone did very well to win the M60 age-group in the World Aquathlon Championships in Ibiza. We begin this issue with an article from him describing the event. We follow this with an article from one of our run leaders, Keith Murkin, about the well-known 'Man v Horse' race, a 22-mile trail race in mid-Wales.

We regularly have large numbers of our members taking part in parkruns. This issue of the magazine includes three articles about parkrun, and celebrates two recent parkrun milestones. Michael Bassett describes two American parkruns, one in Washington State and one in Florida. Michelle Klein, who represents our slower runners on the club committee and recently ran her 250th parkrun, explains how parkrun has changed her life. And Annie Cripps describes how her husband Paul has reached the even more impressive total of 500 parkruns.

Our usual history articles include a review of 1978. This was four years before Striders were formed, but I thought that it was worth including it, partly as a tribute to the excellent powers of endurance shown by Don Claxton, who has recently become a regular participant at the South Norwood parkrun. In 1978, at the age of 40, Don ran a marathon in 2 hours 26, which is several minutes faster than Striders' club record. This year, four months after his 85th birthday, he completed the South Norwood parkrun in 29 minutes 52, becoming the oldest person to run the course in under 30 minutes. On a sadder note, the same article is a reminder of the death of a well-known Blackheath Harrier in the 1978 Three Peaks race. Fortunately, health and safety standards in trail races today are much better than they were in the 1970s.

As usual, it is probably worth reminding members, especially newer Striders, that there is a form on our website (<http://www.stridersofcroydon.org.uk/races/results/>) which people can use to submit their race results. Submitting results via this form should make it easier for Graeme Drysdale to compile our annual road rankings, and is also very helpful for whoever is submitting our weekly press reports to the Croydon Advertiser (although we do have a limit of 300 words for our press reports, so that it is not usually possible for our reports to include all the races which Striders have taken part in). At the Brighton Marathon in April, our first female finisher had not entered as 'Striders of Croydon' and had not added her name to the spreadsheet which our secretary Michael Smaldon had circulated. Consequently, our press reporter did not know that she was running, and her name did not appear in that week's press report. Later that month, the Manchester Marathon did not have a 'search by club' option on the results section of its website, and more than half of our finishers in that event had not added their names to Michael Smaldon's spreadsheet.

One of our former editors, Robin Jamieson, habitually used to conclude his introductory remarks with "may all your runs be through sunlit forests". I'm not sure whether that is a realistic ambition for members of a club based in Croydon: most of my runs are on local roads or through local parks, and it seems a long time since I last ran through a forest. But I hope that all Striders continue to enjoy their training runs, wherever they take place.

Alon



WORLD AQUATHLON CHAMPIONSHIP: SANTA EULALIA, IBIZA

(by Matthew Stone)

Introduction

After my success in Bilbao in winning the European Aquathlon Championship in 2022, I was keen to utilise my automatic qualification to enter for the 2023 World Championships which were being held in Ibiza on 1st May. This would be my fifth Championship entry.

There are various formats of Aquathlon depending on the options available to the organisers. The Championships are now always an open water swim of around 1000m followed by a 5000m run. An important part of any multi-sport is the transition, for this race I had to get my wetsuit off and running shoes on as quickly as possible. There was also a significant distance to run in transition.

Preparation

When I re-read my article on Bilbao, my open water preparation was very comprehensive and I had done several Aquathlons as well. However this race was to take place at the start of the season and it was not possible to prepare in the same way. Hopefully most other competitors would be in the same boat.

I tried my racing wetsuit on a few days before to check the fit. Unfortunately it had many tears and rips in it, so I had to do quite a few repairs. When complete it seemed like they would keep the water out for a while and not get any worse.

I was quite confident about my swimming, which had been going well in the pool. I had built up my strength in the gym and this reduced my front crawl rep times significantly. I did a couple of 1000m swims taking 15:30 in the last week in April, which were a confidence boost that I could easily manage that distance.

Run training had not gone so well. I had done 240 miles in January, but picked up a slight injury in my hip. It did not stop me running, but I did fewer long runs. The cross country races I did were fine, and in April I concentrated on faster sessions, doing parkruns and 800m reps. I wasn't able to produce anything very quick, which would have been a confidence booster. I would race in my colourful Asics Noosa Tri 14. These have elastic laces and are designed to run in sockless. They have more cushioning than my previous Tri shoes and I find them very quick to put on. I prefer them to the Vaporfly 2's I had used in Bilbao.

I read the athletes presentation prepared by the organisers, the International Triathlon Union a few times so I understood it fully. There were 33 competitors in my age group, there would be 60 in my swim wave, so it shouldn't be too crowded or get physical.

I just hoped my swim would be strong and it seemed possible to step up the running on the day.

In Ibiza

I had booked a small hotel five minutes' walk from the swim start. The flight arrived on Saturday, so I had two nights in the hotel before the race and one night afterwards. I found it difficult to sleep, and only managed about 3 or 4 hours each night, due to excess nervous energy and worry about my potential run speed. I was still well rested and the race would be less than 40 minutes long.

On Saturday morning I went down to the run course for a recce. I did about 5K but it was quite slow, because the Duathlon was on and there were many spectators milling around, so I had to go off course and found a steep hill to run up. I felt I did not need any pace at this stage, just to keep the legs active.

The swim familiarisation was in the late afternoon on Saturday, it was still warm and sunny. I had gentle 750m swim, the first in my wet suit since September. The water temperature was publicised as 19C, so it would certainly be wetsuit optional for Age Groupers. The water quality was high with excellent visibility. It was quite calm with only small waves and no wind.

The 3 buoys were moored out at sea, it was to be a beach start, where the competitors line up on the beach and then sprint into the sea, diving at the appropriate time when the water was deep enough. Many competitors were practising the sprint and dive, and then swimming the race course as advertised.

I didn't do that, I thought might get caught up in swimming more quickly than I planned to. Also the race was in the morning, and the conditions would surely be different, though the tidal range was low.

The Race – Start

After a restless night, I went down to the transition area at 8AM, first in line for the opening. I found my box, and put my shoes, cap, shades and race belt adjacent to it. I checked out the entrance and exit and noted how I would get to my box after the swim. Then it was back to the hotel for their healthy breakfast

The race started for my wave (two age groups, M60-69) at 11:35. This was much better than Bilbao, where we had to wait around all day, with increasing nervous tension. After breakfast I walked back to the start with just my swim equipment, in bare feet, to watch the elites start.

Mysteriously two big yellow buoys had appeared on the far side of the swim finish gate and all the elites were marching out one by one, into the water between the buoys. So it was to be a shallow water start, not a beach start, and the course was anti clockwise, not clockwise. I felt rather smug at this point about not having swum the exact route in familiarisation.

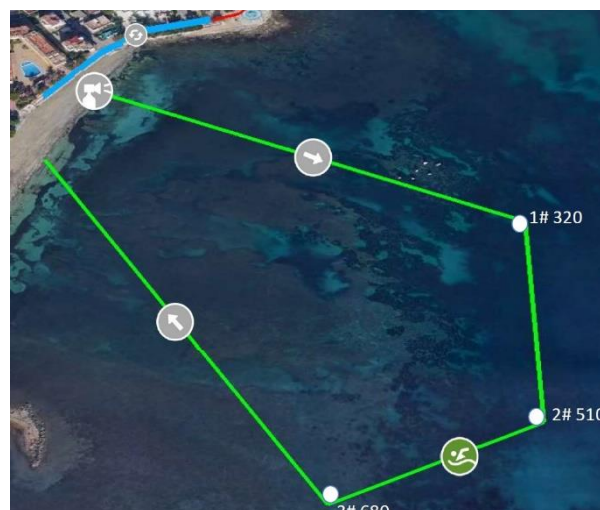
After watching the younger age groups starting, my wave walked into the start pen, all with our red hats and wet suits, eyeing each other speculatively. We chose our starting spots in the water between the buoys, I found a less crowded spot where I could still be at the front. The hooter sounded, a standing dive and we were off.

The Race – Swim and Transition

The sea was quite rough. The wind was blowing directly onshore creating significant waves that you had to batter your way through with abrupt rises and falls. There seemed to be a few swimmers ahead of me.

I just wanted to get to the first buoy, with the left turn the impact of the waves would reduce. I arrived at it at the same time as one other swimmer. I got the inside line and left him behind, then there just seemed to be two ahead of me. I thought I would draft on them for a bit, as it saves much energy in swimming. After the second buoy, they split and I thought they were going too slowly, so I went ahead and got to the third buoy first. It was difficult to spot the finish and I couldn't see anyone ahead of me, so I think I went a bit wide at this point. However I still got to the swim exit ahead of those two and in the lead (I thought!)

Transition went well for me, I have gradually cut the legs short on my race wetsuit so I can now easily get out of it and the Asics Noosas slipped easily onto my feet. I almost barged past a couple of slow competitors in the long narrow transition area, then I was out on the run course. I felt full of confidence at this stage, as I imagined I was first out of the water on the swim, and didn't think anyone could possibly overtake me on the run.



Swim as originally planned, swam in reverse. Transition in blue

The Race – Run and Finish

I wasn't taking any chances and continued to push hard. The course looked complicated on the map, but was actually just one lap and easy to follow as there were no choices to make on the many turns. The courses are designed so the spectators, of which there were many, can see each runner several times. This also means there was plenty of encouragement and shouts of support for GB as I went past.



Run route. Elevation was 18m

The running surface was often shiny tiles, which were potentially slippery – fortunately my shoes felt secure on this surface. The temperature was pleasant for racing, in an Aquathlon you usually benefit during the start of the run from the coolness of the swim.

I had my Garmin to use to judge the pace, but I suspected it would come out short on distance, due to many sharp turns and proximity to buildings, so I just ran as fast as I could to get to the end. The total elevation was only 18m so an even effort was required.

As I went through the finish, I heard the announcement that there was another World Champion, Matthew Stone in the M60+ category. The feeling of elation was intense and difficult to describe. There was relief and relaxation of the pressure I felt to deliver this result to all my athletic friends and family at home.

Race Review – Other Competitors

After the finish, I chatted to Petr Schmidt, who came second. I had met him before in Fyn, when I beat him into third place. He is a phenomenal swimmer, and was the fastest swimmer by over 2 minutes, and I hadn't seen him at all on the swim, or realised when I overtook him on the run. I think it helped my confidence to be unaware of how far ahead he was after the swim!

The Italian who came second to me in Bilbao was indeed a good runner, as he had claimed, running the fastest 5K in 18:31. However his swim was poor, he only managed fourth and didn't worry me.

Unusually the top 3 swimmers made up the top 3 overall, which showed the greater relative difference in this swim compared to the run.





Race Review – Performance

My margin of victory had increased from 47 seconds in Bilbao to 74 seconds. Suddenly all my concerns and worry of the previous two troubled nights seemed rather unnecessary. My age grade for the run was 86.02%, which was slightly higher than in Bilbao.

My time was 38:15 this time, compared to 34:02 in Bilbao – The swimming conditions in Bilbao were very quick (assuming you could complete it) as it was possible to be aided significantly by the current if you picked the right course. Ibiza was a better test of swimming ability with a powerful stroke to the first buoy and good pacing overall well rewarded. I rate this as my best multi-sport swim.

Results: 2023 World Triathlon Aquathlon Championships Ibiza | 60-64 Male AG

 Santa Eulalia, Spain • 01 May, 2023

| 60-64 Male AG | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------|------|---|-----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|--|
| Filter: Type to filter... | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pos ^ | First Name | Last Name | YOB | Country | Start Num | Time | Swim 1000m | T1 | Run 5km | |
| 1 | Matthew | Stone | 1962 |  GBR | 3376 | 00:38:15 | 00:17:49 | 00:01:44 | 00:18:43 | |
| 2 | Petr | Schmidt | 1959 |  CZE | 3401 | 00:39:29 | 00:15:34 | 00:01:53 | 00:22:03 | |
| 3 | Javier | Dominguez Muñoz | 1962 |  ESP | 3365 | 00:39:37 | 00:17:54 | 00:01:42 | 00:20:02 | |
| 4 | Carlo | Simongini | 1962 |  ITA | 3380 | 00:39:57 | 00:19:50 | 00:01:37 | 00:18:31 | |

After the Race

The medal presentation kept to a tight schedule, unlike Bilbao. We had a combined presentation with the ladies, Lesley Meade had won the VW60+ category again, so the ceremony felt familiar. The gold medal felt heavy around my neck, something substantial to help remember the event.



That evening and the following day, the town was full of UK athletes. I was invited to join a group from Huddersfield for dinner, apparently I had overtaken a couple of them on the run. It was nice to relax with some beers and have company after being by myself for two days.

My flight home was in the evening, I caught the ferry to Ibiza town, and spent a few hours on sunny Talamanca beach before flying back to Luton airport.

Link to results

https://triathlon.org/results/result/2023_world_triathlon_aquathlon_championships_ibiza/584032

MAN v HORSE: WHAT A RACE! (by Keith Murkin)

The event began in June 1980 following a chat over a pint (or three) in the back bar of the Neuadd Arms Hotel. The then Landlord, Gordon Green, overheard two men discussing the relative merits of men and horses running over mountainous terrain. The enterprising Gordon, never one to miss an opportunity to promote Llanwrtyd Wells and improve business at his hotel, decided to put it to the test. And so began Green Events and its first, longest standing and now internationally acclaimed event, Man v Horse.

The course was changed in 1982 to provide a more even match between the man and the horse, resulting year on year in very close finishes over the 22-mile course – sometimes with the horse winning by only a few seconds. It took 25 years before a runner finally beat all the horses – in 2004, Huw Lobb won in 2 hours and 5 minutes, beating the fastest horse by 2 minutes. His feat was repeated 3 years later by Florian Holtinger and again in 2022 by Ricky Lightfoot. Could you be the next?

The escalating jackpot for a runner who beats the first horse and rider, which starts at £500 and increases by £500 each year the event takes place until it is won, stands at £500 for 2023. The first jackpot received by Huw Lobb in 2004 had reached £25,000!

All this led my niece's husband, Rob Saunders, to convince me to do it in 2022, and man what a brilliant race! Anybody who loves trail running has to give this famous race a go. The night before there is such a buzz in the little town where you pick your number up from the Village Hall, then all runners and riders go to the only pub, the Neuadd Arms. for a free pasta party where you meet up and chat to the other competitors from all around the world, exchanging stories about this unique race.

Race day, waiting outside the pub on the start line, I couldn't quite believe what I was about to do. I started my stretching and obviously was talking to everyone as I always do, and the gun went and we were off! The horse and riders started 15 minutes after the runners.

The course started with a short spell of road that lead to a long hill where we were slowed down by everyone walking, and the first horses came past towards the top of the hill. It then opened up to some great trails, un-runnable hills, streams, bogs, and some amazing scenery. At every 5-mile stage we ran past the vet stations where the horses have to stop and rest and have a vet check. All the riders were cheering us on which really gave me a boost.





Around 2 miles from the finish we could hear the loud tannoy playing music and announcing the people finishing. This gave us an enormous boost, and although exhausted we sprinted (ish) to the line, where we were welcomed by a brilliant crowd, free peanut butter from Whole Earth who sponsor the event, an amazing medal, free food and a much-deserved pint.

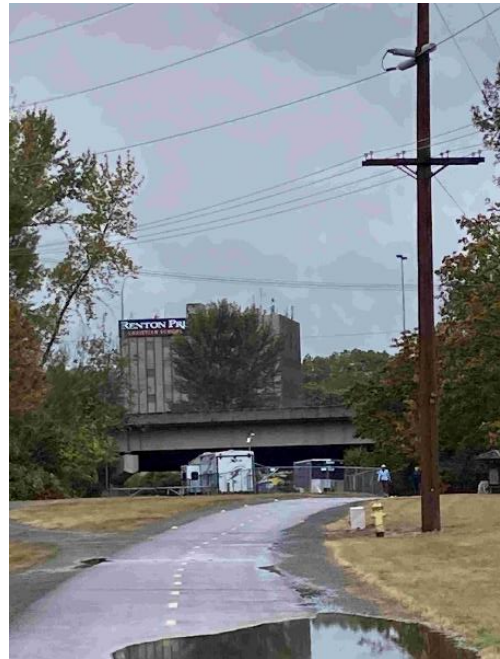


If you ever get the chance to do this race you have to give it a go. It's definitely up there as one of my favourites, hence why I'm doing it again this year, on Saturday 10th June.

A TALE OF TWO USA PARKRUNS (by Michael Bassett)

Renton parkrun, Cedar River Trail Trailhead, Renton, Washington State

Renton parkrun is situated just outside Seattle not far from the airport. It's home is the Cedar River Trail that extends for more than 17 miles alongside the Cedar River on a paved historic off-road route between the river and State 169 through Renton, Maplewood, Cedar Mountain, Maple Valley and Rock Creek, so perfect for those who want to extend their running experience beyond 5 km. We took the 101 bus to Renton from the centre of Seattle (about 30 minutes ride) and then it was just a short walk/warm-up jog to the start ready for 9 am. Helpfully on this wet October weekend they had moved the start and finish a few metres so that it was under the 405 road bridge, as the heavy rain hadn't abated since before we left the town centre.



The run is all on well-made wide paths, although there were some substantial puddles to run through / navigate around with run-off water from the sides of the trail sitting on the surface. It's an out and back course with gradual bends but no tight turns, only a small amount of elevation alongside trees, steep sided cliffs and drops to the river, passing over it at one point on a metal bridge. Picturesque definitely and no doubt even better earlier in the Fall... and on sunny days.



We didn't spot the restrooms and there was no mention of a coffee shop for post-run gatherings, but everyone was so wet they probably wanted to head home to dry out. We did find SHARI'S, a typical American diner, for brunch a short walk away, passing along the side of the Cedar River where the salmon were leaping their way upriver. It was a typical American parkrun, small with a mix of local runners and numerous tourists from the UK and a very friendly, welcoming and helpful team of volunteers.

Weedon Island Preserve parkrun, St. Petersburg, Florida

When you think of Florida, you think of warm temperatures and sunshine, and while it was certainly drier than a few weeks before in Seattle, it wasn't exactly warm. Arriving for a 7.30am parkrun start in November with just a little daylight and the sun only just managing to climb halfway over the trees there was a freshness, with a slight breeze feeding a desire to keep those outer layers on until the last moment. This parkrun is around 16 miles (22 minutes) by car southeast of Tampa in the area of St. Petersburg, a well-known tourist area with many parks, state parks and beautiful beaches.

A mile or so into the preserve is the car park; as usual in Florida there's plenty of space for the SUVs and... the start of the run. The briefing was clear to the many visitors taking part: a loop, a couple of dog-legs, some sharp turns, not a hill in sight (elevation gain 2 m) and back to the finish. Underfoot is fun; there's tarmac, and smart fairly new boardwalk, interspersed with trail through the mangroves, damp but not wet underfoot and plenty of tree roots and leaves for the unwary. It could be fast, but the dog-legs are fairly tight and one has a spectacular viewing tower across the preserve that makes it difficult not to slow down, admire and grab a picture.



There are herons of different types, gopher tortoises (too early and chilly for them to be about on this occasion) and ospreys galore picking up an early thermal, with the temperature rising nicely by the end of the run. You can certainly understand why they would want the 7.30 am start on a warmer day!



As usual we were greeted by a really friendly crew of volunteers who were delighted to see the visitors and made us very welcome at a nearby Starbucks post-event, pulling chairs together for about 17 to gather round one table. Sadly we had no time to visit the rest of the preserve nor the visitor centre, but it all seems to point to a lovely place for spending a couple of hours canoeing or wandering the trails.

HOW PARKRUN CHANGED MY LIFE (by Michelle Klein)

Let me introduce myself, I am Michelle, the Commercial Director at Yogamatters. I am going to start off by making a rather bold statement which I believe to be true: parkrun changed my life.

parkrun is where my running journey began to flourish, it is also where I met the best of like-minded friends and a running community, where I discovered new trails, but most importantly it is where it all started in making me realise that I am capable of so much more than I ever thought possible.

I hadn't been a particularly active adolescent (I always made excuses to get out of PE lessons) but in my early twenties I began practising yoga, which I enjoyed from a strengthening and toning point of view. I also had an excellent teacher in Wimbledon in the early days who really motivated and inspired me. It was only in my mid-thirties though that I thought I should add cardio into my fitness regime.

Then when I moved to Croydon a few years later and it was no longer convenient for me to travel to my yoga class in Wimbledon, I decided to take up running more consistently. I also wanted to explore some new running routes and then I discovered Lloyd parkrun in March 2014. Over time, I became a regular parkrun runner. It was here that I met some runners from Striders of Croydon who encouraged me to join their running club. 'But I am not a runner' I thought – the furthest I had ever run was 5k, but that was about to change!

I joined Striders of Croydon in 2016, which gave me the courage to set a very big goal for myself: I wanted to run a marathon before I turned forty and so that's what I set out to do. The following year, 2017, I ran my first marathon, the Brighton marathon. I put in all the training which, as a "beginner", increasing mileage over a 16-week period, really took it out of me. It is not only physically but mentally draining and no matter what anyone says, road running is really hard, especially over that distance. But on completing my goal, I had runner's high for weeks afterwards. It was one of the best experiences of my life, I was supported by many of my running club mates and as soon as I crossed the finish line I thought, 'that was incredible, I've got to do that again!' I took that as a good sign.

Serendipitously, this was the same year that I joined Yogamatters. I was still practicing yoga (albeit at the gym), so to be part of an ecommerce business that prioritised health and wellbeing and whose values aligned with my own, I really couldn't think of anywhere better to work. I find that yoga is an excellent supplementary exercise to running, in more ways than one;

- I use a combination of yoga asanas to strengthen and lengthen my hamstrings, calves, glutes and hip flexors (key muscle groups for a runner);
- I use breath more deeply so I can train for longer and manage my heart rate more effectively;
- I also use meditation techniques to tackle negative distractions when I train or race.

My running has steadily improved over the years, and by improved, I mean I am now a long-distance runner at heart. The longer and slower the run, the better! I also transitioned to trail running, which to be honest is a much slower paced and more satisfying way to run. I am very blessed to live on the edge of the Selsdon Wood Nature Reserve and close to the North Downs Way, and am surrounded by green spaces in every direction. You'll always find me at parkrun on a Saturday and on the trails exploring on a Sunday.

During lockdown, getting out onto the trails helped me cope with so much uncertainty. This period of time came with so many mixed emotions, my mental health felt incredibly fragile, but my running was and still is one of the things that holds me together and keeps me sane. Long slow runs were one of the highlights to come out of lockdown, I began to appreciate running in solitude, running alone with just my thoughts made me grateful for my health and all the blessings and abundance in my life. Running was and still is my salvation.



I have now completed 5 marathons and 2 ultra-distance marathons and have very recently also achieved my 250th parkrun milestone, almost 9 years to the day from when I first started – what an incredible journey it has been!

Last month I also gained my Leadership in Running Fitness qualification through England Athletics, which means I am now “qualified” to lead fun running sessions for a mixed ability group of runners. I regularly volunteer to lead runs at my club and can hopefully support other newbies or steadier runners in reaching their personal running goals and sharing in the joy of running.

I am so thankful for my health and hope to continue running injury free and hopefully stack up a few more marathon medals along the way. I am also truly grateful to Yogamatters who support my health and wellbeing journey.



PAUL'S 500TH PARKRUN (by Annie Cripps)

For the first time in a while the sun came out over Lloyd Park – there was a slight breeze, the mud had dried out, the daffodils were blooming and Spring really felt as if it had arrived!

In April 2011 Paul Cripps did his first parkrun; April 2023 saw a milestone as he lined up to start his 500th.

The journey started way back on 9th April 2011 when Paul decided to go and investigate the 23rd Lloyd parkrun; it had 36 finishers, 13 volunteers, 8 first timers and 10 PBs, and he finished 10th in a respectable time of 26:17 with a 53.96% age grading. He came home buzzing...

That first run started something... Alan Dolton spotted him as an ex Croydon Harriers' Triple Jumper and convinced him to join Striders of Croydon; he chased a PB for parkrun to under 20 minutes (not at Lloyd Park!!); ran 432 Lloyd parkruns in all weathers, and all mud conditions, once dressed as a skeleton, and more than once as an elf, always on Christmas Day and New Year's Day and often with Ronnie the Cockapoo – who we reckon has done at least 350 parkruns!

As a family we have lived the highs of the fast ones and the lows of the 'slow ones', and wherever we are Paul finds a parkrun on Saturday morning.

Fast forward 12 years and on 8th April 2023 Paul has just run the 596th Lloyd parkrun, which had 209 finishers and 23 volunteers, 39 first timers and 23 PBs; he finished 26th in a great time of 22:20, with 70% age grading – he came home buzzing!

Five of the 209 finishers were there for his first run and for his 500th: Alan Dolton; Micky Wheeler; Peter Attewell; Ewa Bowie & Ralph Dawkins – they have a huge 2,386 parkrun finishes between them. Robert McCann also ran in that first one (& got a PB) and he volunteered at the 500th, while Chris Smith and Debra Bourne were volunteering on both occasions.

Thank you to the 45 Croydon Striders who came out to support Paul – it was great to see so many of you!

(This article is a shortened version of the race report from the news section of the Lloyd parkrun website)



July 2012 – Paul wins a sprint finish to secure ninth place (photo by Debra Bourne)

BOOK REVIEW: FAST AFTER FIFTY

(by Joe Friel: reviewed by Alan Dolton)

Joe Friel is well-known as a coach of cyclists and triathletes. His book 'Fast After Fifty' is advertised as being aimed at "all endurance athletes: cyclists, runners, skiers, swimmers, triathletes". The prologue to the book refers to the Colorado runner Libby James, who in 2013 ran a half-marathon in 1 hour 45 minutes 56 seconds. What made this noteworthy was that Libby was 76 years old, and her time was a world record for a woman over the age of 75.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, comprising three chapters, is entitled "older, slower, fatter?". It asks whether it is possible to slow the 'decline in physical attributes' which usually accompanies ageing.

The first of the three chapters within this part is entitled 'the ageing myth'. It observes that while there are a few professional cyclists in their early 40s, there are none in their mid-40s, and that performances decline more rapidly after the age of 50. It also discusses a study by Dr Michael Pollock, showing that the athletes whose performances showed the least decline as they aged were those who had continued to train at a high intensity. Friel comments that 'all exercise is good, but vigorous, high-intensity exercise produces greater benefits in aerobic fitness'. The second chapter, entitled 'the ageless athlete', observes that while even the most determined athletes eventually experiences age-related physical changes, 'the negative effects are delayed and diminished' in those who train at a high level.

The third chapter, entitled 'over the hill', discusses aerobic capacity, lactate threshold and 'economy' (i.e. how efficiently people use oxygen while exercising). It refers to a study of high-standard male cyclists, showing that their average VO2 max dropped from 69.5 in their 20s to 62.7 in their 50s, but then dropped much more steeply to 43.6 in their 60s. Friel discusses the various reasons for this, observing that even 'serious senior athletes' show a trend towards a less vigorous lifestyle, and that their training becomes less strenuous as they age.

The second part of the book, comprising five chapters, is entitled 'faster stronger leaner'. The first chapter in this part is entitled 'the high-performance senior athlete'. It refers to a French study of older triathletes, which showed that as they aged, their cycling slowed less than their running. Friel observes that 'this may well be because cycling places little stress on muscles, tendons and joints and can therefore be tolerated for very long periods'. He also reiterates the findings of the study by Dr Pollock, suggesting that 'in order to reduce the decline in aerobic capacity with advancing age, training must be intense'. Friel comments that 'the most effective and efficient use of your time and energy to increase training intensity is to do some type of interval training'. He also suggests that endurance athletes should undertake regular strength training.

The fifth chapter in the book is entitled 'training basics'. Friel observes that 'the most common risk for the senior athlete is a breakdown due to injury. But overtraining is also possible, and it occurs now with a much lower training load than when you were a youngster'. The sixth chapter is entitled 'advanced training', and is the longest chapter in the book. It discusses two types of interval training ('aerobic capacity' and 'lactate threshold'), and 'aerobic threshold' workouts (also known as 'long steady distance'). Friel suggests that the duration of these 'aerobic threshold' workouts should depend on the duration of the 'goal event' (or 'target race'). He suggests that, for a competitor with a 'goal event' lasting less than two hours, an aerobic threshold workout should last for between 30 minutes and an hour. By contrast, a competitor with a 'goal event' lasting more than four hours should do 'aerobic threshold' workouts lasting for between two hours and four hours. The chapter also discusses strength training, 'periodisation' of training, and planning a weekly routine. Friel comments that 'trying to shoehorn four demanding workouts into seven days every week may simply be too much for many senior athletes'. He suggests that it may be better for older athletes to allow extra recovery time by repeating particular workouts every nine days, or even every twelve days, rather than every seven days.

The penultimate chapter in the book is entitled 'rest and recovery'. Friel observes that older athletes 'are more susceptible to joint, muscle and tendon damage, and once the soreness sets in, we heal more slowly than young athletes do'. He observes that it is important to get enough sleep, and comments that 'proper nutrition is more critical to the senior athlete's performance than it is for younger athletes'. He discusses the

subject of nutrition in the final chapter of the book, which is entitled 'body fat'. In this chapter, Friel observes that many older people tend to lose muscle but add excess fat. He suggests that older competitors should eat more protein and less carbohydrate. He observes that the best way 'to fight back is through regular vigorous exercise. High-intensity workouts stimulate the production of anabolic hormones, such as growth hormone and testosterone, which raise your body's metabolism and cut fat accumulation. Long, slow distance workouts are not nearly as effective at accomplishing this ...'.

As an older runner who still enjoys competing, despite having slowed down very substantially in the last 40 years, I found this a very interesting book. It needs to be borne in mind that the author's experience is largely based on coaching cyclists and triathletes, and that cyclists suffer fewer tendon and ligament injuries than runners do. It should also be mentioned that the title 'fast after 50' may be slightly misleading, because the book is not aimed at people who want to compete in short-distance events such as the 200 metres or 400 metres, but at people competing in endurance events. Nevertheless, the author makes a convincing case that older competitors need to do regular high-intensity interval training and strength training, rather than confining themselves to steady-paced aerobic training. The book is worthwhile reading for any Strider who has passed the age of 50, and is no longer as fast as they used to be.



Angela Copson, who ran 10000 metres in 44 minutes 25 seconds at the age of 70

(This article originally appeared in the September 2018 club magazine, but is republished here – in a slightly revised form – for the benefit of newer Striders)

COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: MARCH – MAY 2023

In the East Surrey League cross-country race at Lloyd Park on 4 March, Striders placed equal third in the team event. They were led by Tatsuya Okamoto who ran well to finish eighth, completing the five-mile course in 29 minutes 38. Lee Flanagan was eleventh (30:20), Krzysztof Klidzia 13th (31:04), and Matthew Stone completed the scoring team in 19th (31:48). Nikki Javan was the 19th woman to finish (40:02).

In the Paddock Wood Half-Marathon on 12 March, Steve Corfield set a club M60 record of 86 minutes 13.

In the East Surrey League road race at Ewell on 30 March, Striders were led by Tatsuya Okamoto who ran well to place tenth out of the 73 finishers, completing the 4.2 mile course in 25 minutes 30. This ensured that he won the individual league championship in the M40 age-group. Steve Massey was 30th (29:33), Peter Johnson 34th (30:20), Andy Perks 35th (30:36), Mick Turner 53rd (33:45) and Angela Seesurrun 65th (37:31). Striders placed third in the final league table. Daniel Finch won the under-15 league championship.

Consuelo Kennefick ran very well in the South Downs Way 50-mile race, from Worthing to Eastbourne on 8 April. She was the 15th woman to finish, placing third in the W50 age-group. Her time of 9 hours 13 minutes 45 placed her fourth in Striders' all-time women's rankings, and was a new club W50 record.

Striders had 18 finishers in the London Marathon on 23 April, led by Simone Luciani (2:46:18). Striders' first woman to finish was Niamh Vincent (3:14:02). Steve Corfield set a club M60 record of 3:14:48.

Matthew Stone did very well to win the M60 age-group in the World Aquathlon Championships in Ibiza on 1 May. He completed the 1000 metre swim in 17 minutes 49, in second place, and overhauled his Czech rival on the five-kilometre run, which he completed in 18 minutes 43.

The Richmond Half-Marathon on 7 May was the first race of the Surrey Road League season. Striders' men did very well to place fifth in the team event. They were led by Andrew Aitken who was 13th out of 331 finishers (77:52). Tatsuya Okamoto was 19th (78:52) and Erik Schrijnemaekers 66th (86:12). Steve Corfield completed the scoring team, placing second in the M60 age-group and 67th overall (86:13). Striders' women were seventh in their team event. Niamh Vincent was the 19th woman to finish (93:36). Ellyw Evans was 33rd (1:41:11) while Cindy Siu completed the scoring team in 56th (1:46:54).

Tatsuya Okamoto ran very well to finish 12th in a strong field in the Surrey 5000 metre championship at Kingsmeadow on 14 May. His time of 16 minutes 27.75 was a new club M40 record.

Striders returned to the Rosenheim League for the first time since 2013. The first match was at Battersea on 17 May. Sam O'Dongo was second in the A 400 metres (60.34) with Richard Dyson winning the B race (57.90). Steve Corfield set a club M60 1500 record of 4:58.65, placing sixth in the A race against younger opponents. Lorraine Hunte was third in the women's 100 metres (18.17).

Striders had 15 finishers in the Sutton 10-kilometre road race on 21 May, which was the second race in this year's Surrey Road League. Striders' men placed fifth in the team event. Andrew Aitken placed 25th (36:20), Martin Filer 30th (37:06) and Erik Schrijnemaekers 53rd (39:10). Steve Corfield was second in the M60 category and 56th overall (39:13), completing the scoring team. Andy Elliott ran very well to set a club over-75 record of 64 minutes 05. Striders' women placed 16th in the team event. Sarah Madigan was the 95th woman to finish (69:13) while Stanka Petrova was the 103rd woman to finish (83:15).

In the first Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Ewell on 22 May, Steve Corfield won the M60 800 metres (2:24.7) and 3000 metres (10:46.4), both his times being new club age-group records. Consuelo Kennefick won the W50 3000 metres (12:16.3). Paul Cripps won the M50 long jump with a club over-55 record of 4 minutes 24, while Sam O'Dongo leapt the same distance to win the M35 event. O'Dongo was also second in the A 200 metres (25.9) with Richard Dyson first in the B race (25.8), Paul Cripps fourth in the M50 race (29.9) and Yasmin Anderson fourth in the W35 race (39.8). Steve Massey was third in the M50 800 metres (2:26.5) and 3000 metres (11:03.2). Paul Cripps was third in the M50 shot (7.09) and the M50 hammer (15.31). Striders' 4 x 400 metre relay team of Sam O'Dongo, Richard Dyson, Steve Massey and Erik Schrijnemaekers finished the evening with second place in their race.

45 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN 1978

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Wimbledon Common on 7 January. The senior race was won by Peter Adams of Aldershot, who covered the five-mile course in 36 minutes 28. Bob Holt of Hercules-Wimbledon was second (36:35) with Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles third (36:40). The team event was unusually close: Hercules-Wimbledon won with 101 points, just one point ahead of Aldershot, while South London Harriers were third with 108 points. Croydon Harriers were fourth in the team event. Clive Thomas finished fourth (37:09) with Martin Russell ninth (37:50), Don Faircloth 19th (38:21), Robin Dickson 37th (39:59), Peter Yarlett 38th (40:03) and Barry O'Gorman 52nd (41:20).

The boys' race, over two and a half miles, was won by Leigh Zone of Aldershot. Epsom won the team event with Sutton second and Surrey AC third. Croydon Harriers finished fourth. Their team was led by Ken Penney who placed seventh, while Ian Wright was eleventh, Mark Hunter 33rd and Gary Bishop completed the scoring team in 34th. All four of these went on to become successful track runners and members of the Croydon team which won Division One of the Southern League in 1985.

The Mitcham 25-kilometre road race took place on 14 January. Mick Hurd of Croydon Harriers won in 77 minutes 12. With Don Faircloth placing ninth and Martin Russell eleventh, Croydon won the team event.

The Surrey Cross-Country League completed its sixteenth season with matches on 18 February. Aldershot won Division One for the sixth successive year. Hercules-Wimbledon placed second with South London Harriers third, Herne Hill fourth and Walton fifth. Croydon Harriers, who had finished second the previous year, fielded weaker teams this season, particularly in a match at Aldershot's home course where their 49-year-old team manager, Ken Crooke, made the scoring team. They faced a relegation battle against newly-promoted Epsom. Epsom finished with 1718 points to Croydon's 1726, so Croydon were relegated to Division Two after seven seasons in Division One. Belgrave won Division Two with Ranelagh second (only one club was promoted).

The Three Peaks fell race was held on 30 April. In poor weather conditions, Ted Pepper of Blackheath, an experienced road runner who was taking part in this race for the first time, went off course and was not found until the following day, by which time he had died of hypothermia.

The AAA marathon took place at Sandbach in Cheshire on 7 May. For Croydon Harriers, Mick Hurd placed twelfth in 2 hours 17 minutes 24.

Epsom won Division One of the Southern League for the second successive year. In 1977 they had been beaten by Haringey and Oxford in the British League's annual Qualifying Match, but they were successful in 1978 and became the first Surrey club to compete in the British League since Croydon Harriers' relegation in 1975.

The Rosenheim League completed its fifteenth season, and had been divided into two divisions for the first time. Hercules-Wimbledon, Mitcham and Sutton were moved to the Western Division where they were joined by Surrey AC and Walton. Croydon Harriers, Herne Hill and South London Harriers were joined in the Eastern Division by Surrey Beagles and Redhill (who were then two separate clubs: they merged in 1987 and disbanded in 2009). Croydon won the Eastern Division with Herne Hill second. The League Final was held at Tooting on 16 August: Herne Hill were victorious with Hercules-Wimbledon second.

South London Harriers held their annual 30-mile road race at Coulsdon on 2 September. Don Faircloth of Croydon Harriers won in 2 hours 49 minutes 18.

In the Harlow Marathon on 28 October, Don Claxton of Herne Hill placed 12th in a club M40 record of 2 hours 26 minutes 58. On 11 November, Don won the Surrey Veterans Cross-Country Championships in Brockwell Park. 45 years later, Don is still running: in May 2023, four months after his 85th birthday, he ran the South Norwood parkrun in 29 minutes 52, becoming the oldest person to run the course in under 30 minutes.

The Surrey Women's Cross-Country Championships took place at Dorking on 9 December. The senior race was won by Annette Roberts of Feltham, who had also won the title in 1975 and 1976. She finished more than a minute clear of the second runner, Croydon Harriers' talented 18-year-old Deansie Phillips. With Teresa Minting sixth and Glenda Goscombe ninth, Croydon won the team event.

25 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 1998

1998 was Striders' third season of track competition in the Southwest London Division of the Southern Veterans League. The first match of the season took place at Kingsmeadow on 29 April, where both Striders' men and women finished fourth of the eight competing clubs. The second match was at Croydon Arena on 18 May. Striders' men again finished fourth, behind Epsom, Kingston and Sutton. However, the team were very pleased to finish three points ahead of local rivals Croydon Harriers. Striders' team captain John McGilvray led by example, setting a club M50 record of 12 minutes 12.1 for the 3000-metre steeplechase. Striders' women also took fourth place in their match. They gained maximum points from the 3000 metres, thanks to second-claim members Maggie Statham and Gill O'Connor. Maggie won the A race in a club record 10 minutes 48.3, while Gill won the B race in 10 minutes 57.2, less than a month after running 3 hours 01 in the London Marathon.

The Surrey Veterans Championships took place at Tooting on 23 May. For Striders, Kevin Burnett won four silver medals, taking second in the M55 100 metres (15.9), 400 metres (74.6), shot (6.08m) and discus (20.45m). He was also third in the javelin (19.60m) and hammer (15.46m). John McGilvray was third in the M50 800 metres (2:24.0) and 1500 metres (5:00.6), with Colin Cotton placing fourth (5:01.1). Future Strider Alan Dolton was second in the M40 1500 metres (4:41.7).

The third Southern Veterans League match of the season was at Kingsmeadow on 22 June. Striders' men had to settle for fifth place, but gained a double win in the 1500 metres, with Bob Ewen winning the M40 race (4:44.6) and John McGilvray winning the M50 race (5:04.0). Former London Marathon winner Hugh Jones made a rare appearance for Kingston in the 5000 metres, winning in the impressive time of 15 minutes 37.8.

Striders placed fifth in the final match of the season, at Sutton on 20 July, where John McGilvray set a club M50 record of 10 minutes 27.8 for the 3000 metres. Future Strider Alan Dolton, in his final race for Croydon Harriers, won the M40 race in 9 minutes 56.7. Both Striders' men and women finished in a creditable fourth place in the final league table.

The AAA Championships were held at Birmingham on 25 and 26 July. Croydon's Natasha Danvers won the 400 metre hurdles (56.27) while Judy Oakes won the shot (17.82m) and Donna Fraser was second in the 400 metres (51.57). In August, Donna competed in the European Championships in Budapest. She placed sixth in the final of the 400 metres (51.53) and helped the British 4 x 400 metre relay team to third place, behind Germany and Russia.

Donna, Judy and Natasha all competed in the Commonwealth Games, held in Kuala Lumpur in September, where they were joined by a fourth Croydon athlete in Michelle Pierre. Judy, who had missed the European Championships through injury, won the shot (18.83m). Donna was third in the 400 metres (51.04) and Natasha placed fifth in the 400m hurdles (56.39). Both Donna and Michelle helped England to second place in the 4 x 400 relay, where Donna ran the last leg in 50.2 seconds.



Future Strider Michelle Pierre, who ran in the 1998 Commonwealth Games

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 2013

Four Striders won gold medals in the annual Surrey Masters Championships, at Ewell on 1 June. Kevin Burnett led the way by winning the M70 100 metres (19.8) and 200 metres (42.3). He was also second in the shot (6.32m), discus (18.34m) and heavy hammer (6.93m). Alan Dolton won both the M55 800 metres (2:41.6) and 1500 metres (5:22.1), while Paul Stanford won the M40 400 metres (60.9) and Kim Ford won the women's 3000 metre walk (23:55.0). Steve Massey took silver in the M45 800 metres (2:37.7).

In the Dorking 10-mile road race on 2 June, Damian Macenhill ran well to place 32nd, recording 61 minutes 38. Lee Flanagan was 36th (62:15), while Striders' fastest woman was Michelle Campbell (83:56). Striders' men placed twelfth, while their women were sixteenth.

Striders' women placed fourth in the Rosenheim League match at Tooting on 12 June. Sarah Cobb won the shot (6.30m) and Sandra Francis was third in the long jump (2.81m). Striders' men placed sixth.

Lee Flanagan ran well to place 20th in the Richmond 10 kilometre road race on 23 June, recording 34 minutes 56. Damian Macenhill was 46th (37:05) with Krzysztof Klidzia 54th (37:23). Striders' men placed seventh in the team event. Striders' women were 14th. They were led by Serena Stracey (46:33), who was followed by Zoe Williams (47:59) and Karen Macenhill (51:30).

In the third Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Ewell on 24 June, Striders' women finished fourth, while our men were fifth. Linda Daniel ran well to finish second in both the W50 800 metres (3:05.2) and the W50 3000 metres (13:34.2), and also ran the fastest leg for Striders' 4 x 400m relay team, who placed third. The other team members were Steph Upton, Sandra Francis and Andrea Jeffries. Colin Cotton set a club M65 3000 metre record of 12 minutes 53.5, placing second in his race. Paul Cripps was third in the M35 triple jump (8.92m).

Striders' men did very well to finish second in the final Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Croydon Arena on 8 July. Bill Makuwa made a very impressive return after a long absence through injury, winning the M35 5000 metres in 17 minutes 13.7, while club colleague Taylor Huggins also ran well to win the M40 race (18:13.6). Julian Spencer-Wood won the M60 800 metres (2:39.1) and was third in the 200 metres (31.5). Mick Turner won the M35 2000 metre walk (12:50.8). This result meant that Striders' men finished fifth in the final league table.

Striders' women also did well to place fourth in their match and in the final league table. Linda Daniel won the W50 800 metres (3:11.7) and set a club W50 record in the discus (13.03m). Michelle Campbell placed third in the W35 800 metres (3:01.1) with Debra Bourne winning the B race (3:16.1). Sandra Francis was third in the W50 200 metres (37.0).

In the Elmore seven-mile road race on 13 July, Striders' women placed sixth in the team event. Steph Upton ran well to be the fifth woman to finish (53:06), and was followed by Serena Stracey (69:33) and Karen Macenhill (69:34). Striders' men placed ninth. Damian Macenhill ran well to finish eighth (42:39). Chris Morton was 58th (50:47) and Ernie Hann 76th (53:34).

In the Elmbridge 10-kilometre road race on 21 July, Striders' women placed tenth. They were led by Karen Macenhill who was 72nd in the women's race and 308th overall (53:22). Karen Peake was 332nd (55:52) and Kim Ford 379th (60:56). Striders' men placed 17th. Damian Macenhill placed 36th (36:52) while Ernie Hann was 78th (39:30) and Sunjay Bhogal completed the scoring team in 152nd (43:57).

Striders' women placed fourth in their Rosenheim League match at Tooting on 24 July. Sandra Francis was third in the long jump (2.92m) and fourth in the 100 metres (17.1). Striders' women also placed fourth in the final league table, while our men were sixth. At Striders' AGM in September, it was agreed that the club should withdraw from the Rosenheim League (we re-entered it in 2023, after an absence of nine years).

In the Wimbledon five-kilometre road race on 11 August, Striders' men placed tenth. Damian Macenhill was 32nd (18:09), Gearoid Quigley 49th (19:12) and Chris Morton 69th (20:16). In the final Surrey Road League table, Striders' men placed equal seventh out of 30 clubs, while our women were twelfth.



**Jane Davies of Epsom leads Michelle Campbell and Linda Daniel in a Veterans League 800 metres
(photo by Hannah Musk)**

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