

Striders of Croydon

DECEMBER 2025 MAGAZINE



Rachel Lindley leading our team in the Surrey Cross-Country League at Hurst Green

CONTENTS:

Dates for Your Diary
Editorial (by Alan Dolton)
Superhalves 1-4 (by Pandie Bronsdon)
Beware of Uncertified Courses (by Alan Dolton)
How Far is 100 Miles? (by Debra Bourne)
The Runway 100 (by Debra Bourne)
The Traditional Sunday Run (by Alan Dolton)
Competitive Highlights: September-November 2025
Striders of Croydon: A Brief History
20 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Winter 2005/06
10 Years Ago – Local Athletics in Winter 2015/16

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2026

Sunday 4 January – Surrey Cross-Country Championships – Dorking
Saturday 10 January – Surrey Cross-Country League – Oxshott
Saturday 24 January – South of England Cross-Country Championships – Beckenham
Saturday 7 February – Surrey Cross-Country League – Lloyd Park
Sunday 15 February – Valentines 10K – Chessington (Surrey Road League)
Saturday 28 February – East Surrey League Cross-Country – Lloyd Park
Saturday 28 March – Kew 10K (Surrey Road League)
Thursday 16 April – East Surrey League Road Race – Ewell
Sunday 19 April – Sutton 10K – Nonsuch Park (Surrey Road League)
Sunday 26 April – London Marathon (Striders marshalling)
Sunday 10 May – Ranelagh Half-Marathon – Richmond (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Sunday 7 June – Dorking 10 miles (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Sunday 21 June – Ranelagh 10K – Petersham (Surrey Championship & Road League)
Friday 3 July – Ranelagh Sunset Sprint 3K – Petersham (Surrey Road League)
Saturday 11 July – Elmore 7 miles – Chipstead (Surrey Road League)
Sunday 19 July – Elmbridge 10K (Surrey Road League)



Striders' women at their Surrey League Division Two race at Hurst Green on 15 November

EDITORIAL: DECEMBER 2025

Welcome to the December issue of our club magazine.

Looking at the 'dates for your diary' on the previous page shows that the Surrey Road League will be beginning unusually early in 2026, with the Valentines 10K at Chessington on 15 February. We hope to see several Striders competing in the various Surrey Road League races.

Pandie Bronsdon has been busy running half-marathons this year, with races in Lisbon, Copenhagen, Cardiff and Valencia. We begin this issue with her account of these races (plus a bit of parkrunning as a warm-up).

Regarding road races, there have been a couple of occasions recently when a Strider has claimed a club age-group record in a relatively small race outside the UK which does not appear to have an official certificate of measurement. In the absence of such a certificate, the committee has not accepted these performances as club records. Therefore, I have included an article giving more information about the measurement of courses for road races. We follow this with two articles from Debra Bourne: one about the measurement of ultra-distance races, and one about the Runway 100-mile race at Manston Airport which she completed in early October.

We also include an article about our traditional Sunday run, and our customary "competitive highlights" and history articles. In addition to our usual '20 years ago' and '10 years ago' articles, I have included a four-page article giving a summary of Striders' history from 1982 to September 2025, which I hope will be of some interest to newer Striders.

We are now halfway through the Surrey Cross-Country League season. In their first season back in Division Two, our women have done well to stay above the relegation zone. It was good to see twelve women competing for us in our match at Hurst Green. If we can field similar teams in our remaining matches, we must have a good chance of retaining our Division Two status. Our men have been competing in Division Three: we have been able to field a good number of runners and are currently in the top half of the table, but outside the promotion places.

I hope that all Striders continue to enjoy their running.

Alon



SUPERHALFS 1-4 (by Pandie Bronsdon)

The Superhalfs is a series of six half marathons across Europe, to obtain your Superhalfs Super Medal. I've managed to get entries to all six over a 13-month period, starting with Lisbon in March '25, Copenhagen in September '25, Cardiff and Valencia in October '25 and Prague and Berlin in March '26. (Sadly, the SuperHalfs series has become a bit of a victim of its own success, and this year seems to be the last one when it was easy (and it wasn't that easy) to get into the races; they are all now balloted.)

Lisbon (1 of 6)

Expecting a weekend of warm(ish) weather training before the Brighton marathon (which I then didn't run), John and I headed out to Lisbon with a gang (what is the collective noun for a multiple of Striders?) for a weekend of running and socialising.

It was not warm. It rained. We did however manage the running and socialising bit.



The Lisbon Half has had lots of feedback about poor organisation, and while I can see why people are unhappy about it, if you step back and look at the wider picture, a lot of it was pretty good. The race starts on the 'other' side of the Tagus river and runs across the 25 de Abril bridge - a major route into Lisbon itself. This means they have to completely close it to traffic for a good couple of hours before the start as well as during the race. This means the only way to get 40k runners to the start is by train, on a single train line. Extra - free - trains are laid on, but it was still a bit like the worst Southern commuter train from East Croydon when the three before it have been cancelled (so us Striders were all fine and knew exactly how to use our elbows). Because it's the main bridge over the river into Lisbon, there is also very heavy, and somewhat 'assertive', security to negotiate, none of which was helped by the pouring rain! I'll accept there was some strange thinking around start pens, with all the pacers, regardless of time, starting in Pen 1, meaning if you're a steadier runner in one of the back pens (like me) you had to almost sprint the first mile just to find your pacer, but other than that I didn't think it was that bad. I know others will disagree.

Running across the bridge was very iconic, and also slightly disconcerting as it wobbles, especially with that many people on it at once. At 2.3km long it also went on for a long time! People stopping to take selfies is becoming quite annoying in races and this one was no exception. I think I ran into more than one (and don't get me on to the people recording themselves as they go. Grrrr).

After leaving the bridge, the race heads north for a period before looping back on itself for the first time. I did manage to see a few super speedy Striders coming back at this point but I'm not great at looking around me and tend to spend more time studying other people's shoes and socks than I do the surrounding area. Scenery is lost on me. There's another loop back at about 8km - great for spectators and apologies

for all those Strider Supporters I didn't see, before a long - and I mean long - straight run along the tram tracks initially, then the river, past the finish and on to Dafundo where it loops back again, this time to the finish in Belém. About six weeks before this I'd tripped and badly pulled my hamstring on a club run, so I'd not done as much training as I wanted and after about 10 miles I was starting to feel this and had to slow right down (even for me). I think this, and some incredibly uncomfortable shoes (yes, I had worn them before), added a good 5-6 minutes to my desired finish time, so while no runner is ever 100% happy with a race time, I was a bit disappointed. If you like long, flat, straight courses, this is the race for you. If you like scenery, this is probably not the course for you.

I'll skip the bit about jumping on a bus we thought was heading in the right direction after the end.....

Copenhagen (2 of 6)

In contrast to Lisbon, Copenhagen was incredibly well organised, bar the start. This time it was just Maili, Erik, John, and I as the International Striders, a small and perfectly formed group.

After a trip to the small expo to collect bibs, a dubious t-shirt (size, me; design and quality, him) and to not buy (any more) expensive Sarsky shorts (him) on Friday, we jumped on the train to Sweden on Saturday morning to take part in the Malmö Ribersborg parkrun; I already have Denmark in my tourist list and needed a new 'flag'. This is a lovely friendly (when aren't they) single lap, flat course round some sports fields and a small lake. It's definitely PB territory, and while I'm never that speedy in a 5k it was hard to remember I was racing tomorrow. The post-run breakfast was overlooking the 'lido' - aka the sea - and looking back at the Orsund Bridge. It does beat the Lloyd Park cafe, sorry.



Up to now the weather had been OK but annoyingly the heavens opened on Sunday, from the time we exited the Metro until the start gun. We managed to get everyone together for a group photo before Erik had to rush off to his holding pen, and Maili, John, and I sheltered under plastic bags and in the baggage tents. Apparently it had "never rained like this before" at the race, according to some native runners.

My main disappointment about Copenhagen was the pre-start. We were corralled into pens for a long time, and these were in turn a long way from the actual start line. By the time my wave started I was very cold and wet, and it took a long time for me to be able to feel my feet properly. I'm not usually cold running but being wet for two hours while standing around isn't to be recommended. Once warmed up I really enjoyed the race, however, and the city really does stop and get behind it. There were crowds everywhere – possibly the most I've experienced for a half marathon – cheering you on and some great motivational

billboards; “*We didn’t close the city for you to stop now*” was the best one and really spurred me on. It’s another flat course, and quite zig-zaggy, which I like, taking you round some great parts of the city. Although she started a bit in front of me, I managed to catch Maili up at about the 19k mark (I’ve had to learn to run in ‘k’s) and we ran almost to the line together which was nice. Her sprint finish was better than mine.



Cardiff (3 of 6)

Three weeks after Copenhagen, it was time for Cardiff. Everyone I spoke to told me I’d love this race. It was flat, it was scenic, it was well supported, and the crowds would carry me along. I even had friends running it.

I hated it!

It didn’t help that on the Friday when John and I arrived the tail end of Storm Amy was passing through and the rain was so heavy my ‘never leaked before even in the heaviest Lake District deluge’ jacket was completely overwhelmed, the expo was already looking like a quagmire, and the children’s race on Saturday had already been cancelled, none of which boded well.

Having done the Cardiff parkrun a few years ago, the plan on Saturday was to head out to Barry Island, to see what was occurring there. It’s a popular tourist destination, for obvious reasons, and it was another one where the number of visitors outdid the locals significantly. They know this and are great about it. The course is a two-lap out and back, along the cliffs. Amy was still playing with us and at one point I really was running on the spot into the wind. I seriously thought one of the volunteer marshals should have been tied down. With hindsight, it probably wasn’t the best preparation for Sunday.



Sunday morning was dry at least, and the start wasn't too far to walk. It did seem quite chaotic when we got there, with the beginnings of a long queue for the bag search before the bag drop. Luckily, we got there just before it got too big – there were a few complaints afterwards. The rest of the start seemed well organised, with each wave having its own start gun and setting off on time (a real bugbear of mine, especially as I'm usually towards the slower end of the entrants and have had to hang around for a long time already). I've also never been at a race where the national anthem is played, and it was quite moving to hear the Welsh one being sung by 30,000 runners.

But, and here it comes, this was one of those races where I just couldn't get into my stride (no pun). I was stiff, my pace was all over the place, the course was definitely not as flat as suggested, in fact I'd say it was almost hilly in places, and some of the other runners were quite 'rude' with a lot of pushing and shoving in the first few miles. I saw one man behind me who'd been tripped hit the ground with such a bang I wondered if he'd got up. The route heads out to Penarth and across the man-made barrage before snaking back into the city centre round the Roath Park Lake. The view out towards the bay across the barrage was pretty but again, people stopping to take selfies or running along with phones on poles recording themselves, plus a random dog walker (no idea how they got to be there) were beyond irritating. Roath Park Lake is the turnaround back to the finish and felt like it went on for ever. It's a long drag uphill which didn't feel to be reciprocated by a long downhill on the other side. My legs had had it by this point and I resorted to stealing sweets from small children along the route to help me get to the finish. Looking back I think maybe it had 'middle race' syndrome – Copenhagen was the first of three and Valencia was going to be the last; Cardiff was just an irritation in the middle.

Valencia (4 of 6)

A couple of weeks after Cardiff, this was my favourite of all the races so far and not just because it means I can take a few weeks off. I've never been to the city before and it's stunningly beautiful, plus it was warm enough for shorts. Too warm at 28 degrees on Friday and Saturday but perfect on Sunday, if a bit humid to start. Erik and Maili were also at this one, Erik being on the same flight as us and Maili coming out a day later. We are all planning on collecting our Super Medals in Berlin next year!

There are no parkruns in Spain and it was a bit too hot anyway, coming from a damp October in England, so I got a lie-in on Saturday, albeit we did do a bit of sightseeing including unexpectedly bumping into a friend of mine who was also running. The temptation to sit in a bar eating tapas all afternoon was very high!

The organisation for this race was the best of all, with very specific, and stuck to, start times. The end of the holding pens was also the finish line, so the faster runners (Erik!) were almost finishing by the time the last start was setting off, but it was all very slick. I've learnt to be optimistic about my finish times on entry forms in order to get an earlier start and it was also nice to be starting closer to 09:00 than 10:30. Maili and I chatted in the holding pen, but she then shot off so I left her to it. I didn't see John the whole way round, not that I ever do. I enjoyed the race, I was comfortable, the conditions were good for me and nothing hurt too much. My pace was initially a bit fast (because I was in a faster start group) but I kept it together until about 15k – where I always have a mental block about how many are left (maths is not my strong point after running that far) and the crowds were very supportive. It's probably been the first one where the primary language heard wasn't English, but I think I worked out what "vamos" meant quite quickly. The route is so flat that the one or two slight inclines over a road bridge feel like hills; I can see why it's reputed to be the fastest 21k in Europe. My time wasn't quite as good as I wanted (again) but I've been fairly consistent all year and have generally enjoyed myself so I'm not going to get too stressed about it.



On meeting up for a beer with Erik a few hours later he told us he'd managed to get back to his hotel after running in time to get to the breakfast buffet, for the second time, before it closed. That is quite impressive! John and I went for tapas, and then for some amazing paella the day after.

Would I recommend running three half marathon races in seven weeks? Probably not. Would I do it again? Probably (although I can't think why I would). Racing is quite different from a training run, even if it's only yourself you're racing against, but it's perfectly doable.

BEWARE OF UNCERTIFIED COURSES (by Alan Dolton)

When we run in a track race, we can be confident that the track has been officially measured and certified as exactly 400 metres. Therefore, if we run the correct number of laps, we can be confident that we have run an accurately measured distance. When we run in a cross-country race, such as the popular Surrey League races, we accept that while the course may be advertised as five miles, it may not in fact be precisely five miles: some courses may be slightly under-distance while others may be somewhat over-distance. This does not matter to most of us, as conditions for a cross-country race vary greatly: some races may be held in fast dry conditions whereas others will be held in heavy mud, so that most runners enter a Surrey League race looking to achieve a particular position (such as placing in the top 50 or top 100), rather than trying to achieve a 'personal best'.

What happens when we enter a road race? Some Striders may enter a road race because it is particularly scenic or challenging. In such cases, they may not be unduly concerned with their official time. But many Striders will enter road races in the hope of achieving a personal best time. It would be very frustrating for anyone who has completed a marathon to subsequently be told that in fact the course was a quarter of a mile short. Indeed, in 1981 the New York Marathon was found to be 150 yards short (the course was lengthened in 1982 and has been accurate ever since). And in 1995, the women's marathon at the World Championships was 400 metres short. The race began on the track, and a marshal directed the runners out of the stadium without having completed a full lap of the track which they were intended to run.

UK Athletics provide a measuring service to ensure that road races can be accurately measured. Those Striders who are interested in the details can find more information on the official website <http://www.coursemeasurement.org.uk/>. Most major races, such as the London Marathon and Brighton Marathon, and most races organised by local athletic clubs, including the races in the Surrey Road League, have certificates confirming that the course has been accurately measured. Of course, it is just possible that emergency road works or a road accident may force a race organiser to alter a course at the last moment: this happened quite a few years ago at both the Sidcup 10 miles and the Hercules-Wimbledon 10 miles, but fortunately such events are rare, and in general one can be confident that a personal best achieved on a course with a UKA certificate is accurate.

Earlier Striders can vouch for the usefulness of such a service, because there were a couple of occasions in the 1980s when club members thought that they had achieved a particularly notable times, only to discover that the course was short of the advertised distance. The first of these took place at Crystal Palace on 30 December 1984, with a 'road race' on the tarmac paths within the grounds of Crystal Palace, which was advertised as 10 kilometres. One of Striders' youngest members, Simon Smith, set what would then have been a Striders club record of 35 minutes 15. However, many of the leading finishers achieved times which were significantly quicker than their lifetime bests, and the organisers subsequently agreed that the course had been short. (It was probably at least 300 metres short, as I placed 22nd in 30 minutes 11, which was almost a minute faster than my lifetime best of 31 minutes 01 on an officially measured course.)

Another example took place on 1 November 1987, when a newly formed local athletic club named Redhill & Surrey Beagles, who have subsequently disbanded, organised what was advertised as a ten-mile road race on a new course, which had not been officially measured, and which started and ended at Chipstead Rugby Club. Many of the runners set what appeared to be new personal bests, but the course was subsequently measured by a member of South London Harriers who found that it was more than 400 yards short of the advertised distance. This helped to explain why Striders' first five finishers, and Croydon Harriers' first four finishers, had all appeared to set new personal bests. (Of the nine runners in question, Nigel Davidson ran a faster time at Tadworth five years later, but none of the other eight managed to reach their Chipstead times on an officially measured course.) It subsequently transpired that the race organiser, who was not herself a road runner, had measured the route by driving round it in her car and using the car's milometer to judge the distance. While a few Striders may possibly measure their training routes in this way, this is certainly not a method of measuring courses which meets the requirements of UK Athletics as laid down on <http://www.coursemeasurement.org.uk/>. This was particularly frustrating for those Striders who had entered the race hoping for a personal best, because races organised by athletic clubs usually meet the UKA requirements, and it tends to be 'fun runs', intended to raise money for charity, which do not bother to comply with UKA's requirements.

The recent increase in the number of 'fun runs', and other informal races intended to raise money for charity, has increased the possibility that a Strider may enter such an event without initially realising that the course has not been officially measured. For example, in September 2014 the Stroke Association organised what was advertised as a 10k in Hyde Park. Hyde Park is a venue at which it should be possible to ensure that the distance is accurate. Unfortunately, the Stroke Association did not do so, and although the event raised a lot of money for charity, it was subsequently accepted that the course was short. (One of the runners to be denied an official personal best was Alice Ewen of Striders, who finished in 41:42, which was more than two minutes faster than her official personal best of 44:10.)

In March 2015, there was a high-profile example of a Strider achieving an outstanding performance on a course which was not officially certified when James Bennett ran in the Brands Hatch Half-Marathon, organised by the British Heart Foundation. A search through the forums of Runner's World indicates that the British Heart Foundation had previously been criticised for advertising 10K races on courses which had been less than the advertised distance, and unfortunately it appears that they did not bother to obtain a UKA certificate for their race at Brands Hatch. James subsequently established himself as our leading road runner and still holds the club records at 10 kilometres, 10 miles, half-marathon and marathon, all of which were set between 2016 and 2018. His club marathon record of 2:32:50 is more than seven minutes quicker than the second fastest Strider, Bill Makuwa, who ran 2:40:38 in 2010. At Brands Hatch, James recorded an impressive time of 69 minutes 50, which was more than three minutes faster than the previous club half-marathon record which Simon Morris had set at the Reading Half-Marathon (on an officially certified course) in 1986. James finished almost 12 minutes ahead of the runner-up, Stuart Penman of Wimbledon Windmilers, who had an official half-marathon personal best of 82:47 (set on a certified course at Ealing) and who ran 81:40 at Brands Hatch. It is also worth noting that the Brands Hatch course was distinctly undulating and that it included off-road sections: it was not entirely on fast tarmac paths. Therefore, the fact that the organisers did not obtain a UKA certificate of accuracy means that there must be an element of doubt as to the exact race distance. James subsequently ran 71 minutes 35 on a certified course at Oxford. Our website shows this as the current club half-marathon record. In my view, the Striders committee were correct to treat James' time on a certified course at Oxford, and not his time on an uncertified course at Brands Hatch, as our club record.

More recently, two Striders recorded notably fast times at a RunThrough race in Stratford in April 2021. Unfortunately, it was subsequently discovered that the course was less than the advertised ten kilometres.

The reason for writing this article is that, within the last 18 months, there have been two occasions when a Strider has claimed a club age-group record in a relatively small race outside the UK which does not appear to have an official certificate of measurement. Most of the major races outside the UK (including all the major marathons) are on courses certified by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). Races in major championships are certified by World Masters Athletics or European Masters Athletics. Other overseas races may be certified by the appropriate national body: for example, the RFEA is the national body for races in Spain.

Clearly there will be occasions when Striders enter a road race for the experience, without being concerned as to the accuracy of the distance. But those Striders who are interested in achieving a personal best, or claiming a club age-group record, should look for races which do have an official certificate confirming that the course has been accurately measured.

The Dorking 10 website (below) shows that its courses have an official certificate of measurement:

Event Details

The Dorking Tens are run under UK Athletics rules and incorporate the Surrey Ten Mile Road Race Championships. A road race, the undulating route loops through the scenic Surrey countryside. Our course accuracy certificate numbers are 21/152 (10 mile) and 21/151 (10k).

A true family friendly event, with races for both committed athletes and recreational runners alike, we welcome and actively encourage wheelchair and disabled runners to participate.

- For entry queries, please contact our Race Secretary Jacqui Cooper on entries.dorking10s@dmvac.org
- To contact our Race Director Claire Blunden please email dorking10s@dmvac.org



Please click on the links for further information on [Location](#), [Course](#), [Prizes](#), [Previous Results](#), [Travel and Accommodation](#) or scroll down to find out more!!

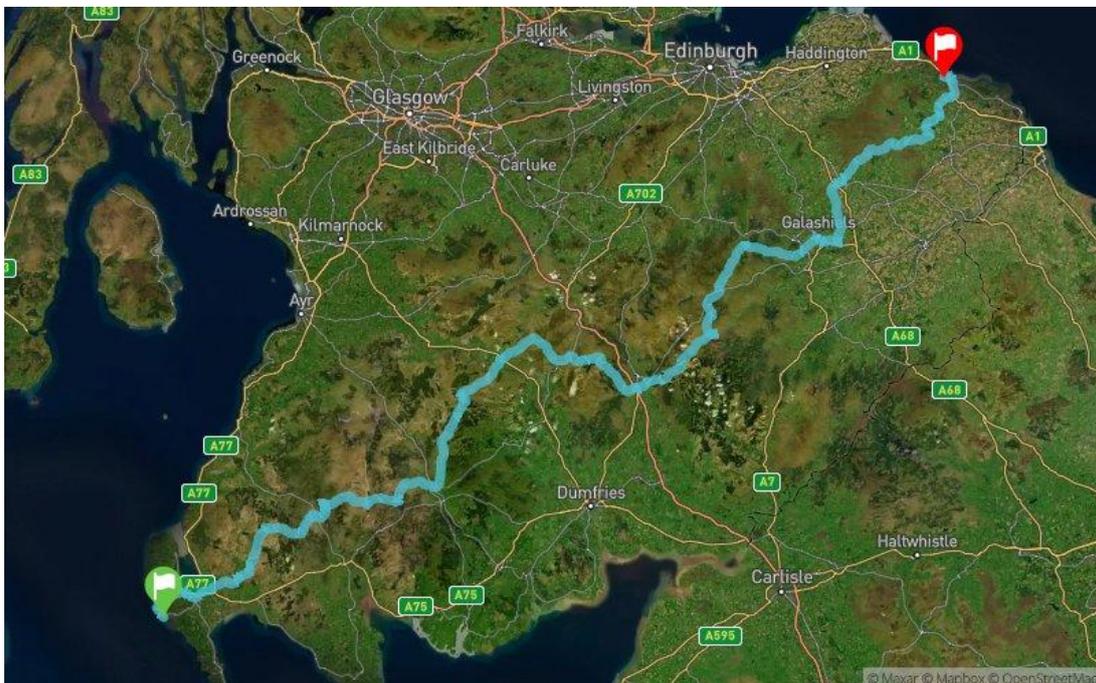
(An earlier version of this article appeared in the March 2015 club magazine. It is republished here – in an updated version – for the benefit of newer Striders)

HOW FAR IS 100 MILES? (by Debra Bourne)

With more Striders dipping their toes into the world of ultramarathons, and as an addendum to Alan's helpful write-up of the perils of short courses, let me warn you that official distances for ultras commonly bear only a vague resemblance to the actual distance run and often an even vaguer resemblance to the distance recorded by a running watch.

Many ultramarathons are advertised as 50 km, 50 miles, 100 km or 100 miles. Others, that are being held in conjunction with several shorter distance options (e.g. EnduranceLife events) are made up of their 'marathon' course plus their '10K' course, so nominally about 32.5 miles. There ARE accurately measured ultramarathons, both on athletics tracks (yes, really, round and round) and on road, and some of these are used for official championships over distances such as 100 K. For trail marathons in particular, however, these distances are often rather approximate. I have run '50K' races of more than 32 miles rather than 31.1, '50 mile' races of 49 to 52 miles or longer, and '100 mile' races of 99 to 105+ miles. The 'short' ones lead to the agonising decision of whether to restart your watch after finishing the race and make your weary legs move for long enough to get the nice round mileage recorded (plus 0.01 miles for Strava tax) - and in the case of 100-milers to gain the coveted 'insanity' badge. The long ones sometimes lead you to question whether you have gone wrong and missed the finish; wonder where the **** the mythical finish has got to; and curse the race organiser in colourful terms.

In races long enough that you stop along the way for considerable lengths of time, but leave your watch running for an accurate total time, your watch also adds false miles whenever you are stationary, as it tries to work out in what direction you are moving (while you aren't). This can really add up over the course of a 100-200+ mile race: The Race Across Scotland, RAS215, is well known to be about 220 miles long, but my Garmin thinks I ran more than 234 miles. I know I had one minor detour, but it really was only about a hundred meters, not 14 miles. Of course, this adds to the fun when you are trying to work out how much further to your next checkpoint, as you need to work out how many bonus miles your watch has recorded - or use the 'distance remaining' on the GPX. If planning to do that, you also need to work out, in advance, the distance of the checkpoints from the end and write them down in that format: do not expect your brain to be able to calculate this when you've already been out for a day or more.



A word of advice to newbies: do NOT go up to the Race Director after the race and tell them that according to your super-duper accurate* running watch, the distance was wrong or inaccurately measured. I guarantee that your 'helpful' comment will not be appreciated. 😊

*Note: it isn't!

THE RUNWAY 100 (by Debra Bourne)

The Runway 100 was a 100-mile ultramarathon organised by RunBelievable and run entirely within the grounds of Manston Airport, a short distance from Ramsgate in Kent. The format was multiple loops around part of the perimeter of the airport and along the actual runway. As described in the pre-event information: "The course will start from the control tower, you will then follow the course signs around the perimeter of the airport before joining the top of the 2752 metre runway. After this you will then follow the signs back to base camp and that's a lap."

Each lap was 6.67 miles long, so 15 laps would be 100 miles, and there was a generous 32-hour cut-off for finishing – RunBelievable likes to be inclusive of slower runners. In addition to the main 100-mile event, there were options of a 24-hour challenge and a 'pacer challenge', whereby people could start at 6pm (or later) pacing a runner through part or all of the night, but also have their effort officially recorded and earn a medal.

The course was pretty flat – my Garmin reported about 5,000 feet of ascent total for the whole 100 miles. My aim for this race was to use the looped, flat, course to practice even pacing and finish at just under 24 hours, which would be 1.6 hours per lap. I wanted to run each lap in about 90 minutes, giving me a little bit of time extra for gear changes etc. Parking was on the run in to/out of the control tower/aid station, so I could have all my gear, including changes of clothing and shoes, preferred foods, head torch etc. to hand at the end of every lap.

I got everything ready to go, the day before the race. Then Storm Amy arrived - and I loaded every waterproof coat I owned into the car.

Thankfully, the rain had blown over by Saturday morning, leaving just a few puddles. I got to the venue about 45 minutes before the start, registered and collected my number. Back to the car to change my shoes. That's when I hit a snag: the shoes I wanted to wear didn't have insoles in: I'd taken them out of the shoes to wash and dry them after the Race Across Scotland and forgotten to put them back in. I like to run minimalist, but those shoes are not designed for use without insoles and wouldn't be comfortable. I ended up taking the insoles out of the shoes I had used for driving – not ideal, but better than nothing.

We set off and it felt not too bad – along a concrete section then following the arrows onto the grass and around near the perimeter fence. Apparently, the ground had been rather uneven and the grass overgrown earlier in the year, but now there were parallel tyre tracks that were rather smoother, and wide enough to run along. After lots of turns left then right to follow that perimeter, we reached a concrete perimeter road and followed that, very slightly uphill, on, and on, and on, before finally back onto grass for a short out-and-back (to make the distance work). Then we turned onto one end of the runway for a 2.752 km run down the runway, with a tail wind. At the end, a left turn along the runway, then turning left again to return to base. For some reason, that final section, turning to home base was the section that was by far most strongly into the wind.

I set off probably a bit faster than I should have done, but feeling quite strong at least on the first lap, and I positively enjoyed the long trot down the runway, wind-assisted. We turned back into the wind for the return to the control tower, but it wasn't bad,

A short stop to grab some food (both for immediate consumption and for during the lap), fill my water bottle, and I was off again. I was running near people who I knew were usually a similar pace to me and I wondered why they kept pulling ahead of me. Turned out they had entered the 24-hour version with no intention of continuing for that long.

After the mild breezes of the first lap, the winds strengthened. Each lap the sections facing into the headwind got harder. This was noticeable during the long slightly uphill stretch alongside the perimeter fence, but was for some reason much, much worse after the final turn back towards the control tower – here the force of the wind was a significant obstacle to running. The tail wind down the runway was nice, but as usual never provided as much benefit as the head wind was a disadvantage.



The runway stretching into the distance

Additionally, my feet were uncomfortable. The thin insoles were better than nothing but not great. After a few laps I realised that a different pair of shoes I'd brought did have insoles in and they would probably work better, so I swapped the insoles – definitely an improvement.

I wasn't generally going at the same pace as anyone else, so I was alone most of the time. Normally I don't mind that. I had considered listening to an audio book while I ran – something that I can't do out on the trails, as I can concentrate on the book or on navigation, but not both - and had even brought my MP3 player with me. Alas, I kept thinking about this when I was halfway around the course and forgetting whenever I was back at the car, so it never happened.

I have to admit that the course was not my usual preference. I don't mind looped courses – I've done dozens of marathons and ultras on looped courses – but I prefer better scenery, more variety in incline, and grass/mud/trail rather than mostly manmade surfaces. Running down the runway was a novelty - but one that wore off before the end of 15 laps!

Sunset was about 6.30 pm – time for the head torch. The temperature was definitely falling, and it got colder during the night. There was a distinct difference in apparent temperature depending on whether I was running with or into the wind. The worse section by far, both for force of the wind and wind chill, was the last section before the aid station – I would run down the runway, be nicely warm, turn into the wind and be freezing cold within seconds. The first time I felt that cold I put a warm jacket on over my running jacket as soon as I reached my car, and wore it as I set off on the next lap. For the next several laps I would start by wearing the jacket, take it off and tie it round my waist as I warmed up, then put it on quickly after the run down the runway before turning into the biting cold wind. In the last laps I was wearing it all the time. Towards the end I was getting cold even with the extra layer and in retrospect I should have started adding my waterproof as an additional windproof layer over the top.

Despite using caffeine tablets, I started feeling quite sleepy during the night and had intermittent problems keeping going; I found myself stopping and curling up on the ground for micro-naps. Partway round my 11th(?) lap I joined up with another runner and we kept each other going on that loop. She had only one more loop to go after that. I would have loved to go out with her on her last lap, but sadly couldn't get myself turned around (refilling waters, restocking food) quite fast enough and she disappeared before I could get out of my car and join her.

By this time, I realised that I was unlikely to finish in under 24 hours – the wind and the cold were simply slowing me too much on each lap. I came in at the end of my penultimate lap feeling drained. An older runner was standing around and offered to go out with me – and I said yes. Turned out he was there intending to pace another runner, but that person had dropped out of the race just before he had arrived. We power hiked and chatted, and I decided to forget about the time and simply enjoy the company, so we jogged bits but mostly walked – including for the first time mostly walking down the runway. A final push against the wind and I finished.



With my final-lap pacer



Finished!



My time was disappointing, given the lack of elevation, when I have sub-24 finishes from several much 100-milers with much more challenging elevation profiles. On this occasion the main problem was the wind, both the sheer force of the wind slowing me, and the associated chill factor.

Still, as far as we know it's the ONLY 100-mile event to have been held on an airport – fun to have been part of that. 😊

We continue around the northern boundary of the park, running parallel to Grimwade Avenue. As we approach the Mapledale Avenue entrance to the park, we are crossing an area of land which can get very wet in the winter months. This is because there are several springs located here that emerge between the Thanet sand and the underlying chalk that is beneath our feet.



Beyond the Mapledale Avenue entrance to the park, we stay close to the perimeter of the park and begin heading south down a hill known as Ricketts Hill (named after another tenant farmer who benefited from the Croydon Enclosure Act). We leave Lloyd Park by the Oaks Lane exit. By this exit is a post, with a yellow arrow pointing back into Lloyd Park and with green and red arrows pointing along the stretch of tarmac which leads to Oaks Road. This is one of the signposts which were erected late in 2017 and were described in a good article on the “Inside Croydon” website (see <https://insidecroydon.com/2018/03/09/striders-show-the-way-with-three-routes-round-our-parks/>). They are commonly known as “John Gannon’s posts”, after our former chairman who was primarily responsible for installing them.

Incidentally the rough track on our right is the continuation of Oaks Lane that leads to Coombe Farm, which was owned by Frank Lloyd from 1892 to 1927. It is currently owned by the property developer Anwar Ansari, who has been the subject of several articles on the “Inside Croydon” website.

Addington Hills

We cross Oaks Road (carefully) and enter the lower woods of Addington Hills. Most of this woodland was historically in the parish of Addington (hence the name), but the eastern edge was in the parish of Croydon and the road which runs around this eastern edge is known as Shirley Hills Road. We continue upwards through the woods (heading south) until we reach a path at marshalling point number 17 on the Switchback map, where we turn left (heading east). This marshalling point has another of John Gannon’s waymarking posts with green and red arrows. As we turn left, there appear to be two paths running parallel to each other. The higher path was the original route for our club runs and for the Switchback route. However, it was blocked by overgrown vegetation after a tree fell in 2020, so we need to take the slightly lower path. Soon after this we cross a gully where the slowest Sunday group often turn right to take a short cut through the woods. A few paces after they have turned right, one of John Gannon’s waymarking posts can be seen on the left-hand side of the path leading up the gully. Unfortunately, it is now barely visible from the main path, so that it is much less useful than it was when it was erected in 2017.

Soon after crossing the gully, the main path reaches marshalling point number 18 on the Switchback map, where we turn right up a short slope to rejoin the original path at marshalling point number 19. Our route

continues heading east, and crosses the London Loop, which runs north-east (and downhill) from the well-known Viewpoint at the top of Addington Hills towards Oaks Road. After we have crossed the London Loop, we need to be careful of some prominent tree roots, which are more of a hazard now than they were when Striders began using this path more than 40 years ago. We emerge from the woods at marshalling point number 21, where we turn right up a hill (heading south). Partway along this path we reach marshalling point number 22, where the Switchback race turns right and goes up and down the succession of short sharp hills which give the race its name before reaching the Addington Hills Viewpoint. The Sunday club route does not take this right-hand turn (unless a run leader is feeling unusually sadistic) but continues up the hill to the plateau at the top. We then turn right (heading southwest), going past the Royal Chinese restaurant with the Addington Hills Viewpoint on our right, until we reach Coombe Lane tram stop.

In front of us is the entrance to Royal Russell School, which until the 1920s was a private estate called Ballards Estate. There is a pelican crossing which enables us to cross the A212 safely. Having done this, we turn left along the pavement on the south side of the A212 and then turn right into Ballards Way. Heathfield House and Gardens are on our left, and the London Loop takes a short detour through Heathfield Gardens so that walkers can admire the view. We take the first turning on the left, Riesco Drive, which is named after Raymond Riesco, who had purchased Heathfield House in 1927. We head down Riesco Drive and soon reach the entrance to Bramley Bank, a small woodland area that is managed by the London Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve.

Bramley Bank and Littleheath Woods

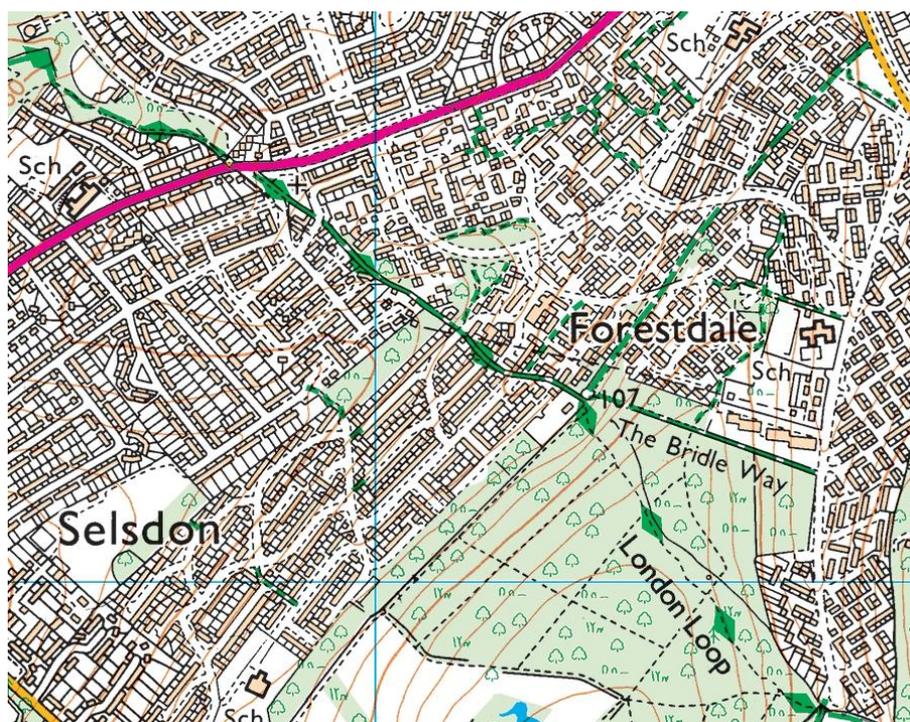
Soon after entering Bramley Bank, the path forks. The London Loop takes the left-hand fork. Traditionally, our faster runners have taken the right-hand fork while our slower runners have taken the same route as the London Loop. The right-hand path is slightly longer but the difference is not great, and the paths join each other at the south end of Bramley Bank. We go through a gate and reach a clearing with Edgcombe (and the Monks Hill estate) on our left and Croham Valley Road on our right. We follow the London Loop, entering Littleheath Woods where we arrive at a small clearing known as Fallen Oak Field (see the map below).



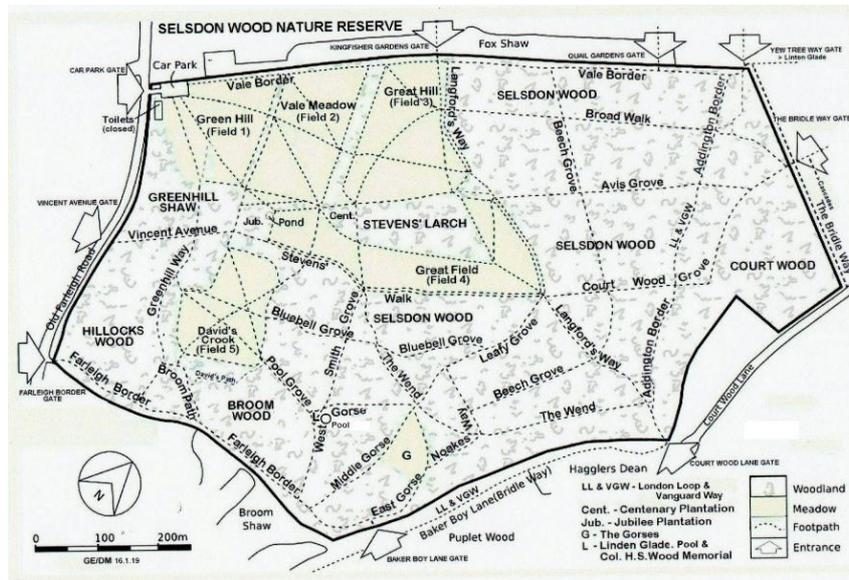
Striders who are aiming to run for 60 minutes rather than for 90 minutes usually leave the London Loop at this point, heading west along either Croham Valley Path (leading to Croham Valley Road and joining the Vanguard Way) or Fields Path (following the red arrows on John Gannon’s waymarking posts and aiming for Queenhill Road). However, the 90-minute route follows the London Loop as it joins the Vanguard Way and heads southeast towards the A2022.



We reach the A2022 just at the point where it changes its name: to our left (heading east) it is known as Selsdon Park Road, while to our right (heading west) it is known as Addington Road. We need to turn left for a few yards to reach a pelican crossing. Having crossed the road, we head right until we reach Ashen Vale, where we turn left. Ashen Vale soon bends to the right, but we follow the London Loop and the Vanguard Way along an old bridleway (see the map below) which used to mark the parish boundary between Addington and Croydon. This crosses Peacock Gardens and Sorrel Bank (where we need to watch for traffic) and takes us to the entrance to Selsdon Woods.



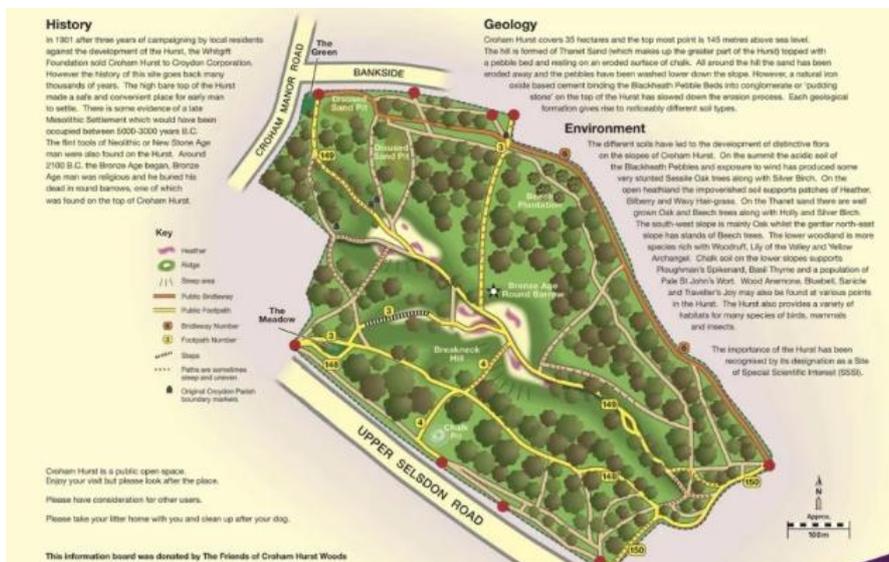
Selsdon Woods



We enter Selsdon Woods at the north-east corner, and we have a choice of routes (see the map above). Our faster runners have traditionally done a complete circuit of the woods, heading south along Addington Border, then west along The Wend and Farleigh Border, and finally heading north along Greenhill Way. Our slower runners have traditionally tended to omit the short sharp climb into the woods and have turned right along the lower path (Vale Border). Our “middle group” have tended to take a compromise route, doing the same sharp climb up Addington Border that our faster runners do, but then turning right into Court Wood Grove before heading for Greenhill Way.

Having enjoyed a short downhill section on Greenhill Way, we leave Selsdon Woods by the car park at the northwest corner. We cross the road and head up Old Farleigh Road, passing Croydon High School and reaching the junction with the A2022 (Addington Road) by Sainsburys. Here we turn left before crossing the A2022 at a pelican crossing. We then turn right into Upper Selsdon Road (the B275) by the premises of Croydon Physio, heading downhill (northwest). Just after passing Crozier Drive, we need to cross the B275 at a zebra crossing, because the pavement on the right-hand side of the road ends. The reason for the lack of a pavement is that Croham Hurst Golf Course is now on our right-hand side. We run past a bus stop (which is served by buses heading for Croydon on route no 412) before having to cross the road again only a few houses later, just after the corresponding bus stop for buses heading for Selsdon. There is a ‘public bridleway’ sign and one of John Gannon’s waymarking posts with a red arrow. We follow the bridleway, heading downhill. Two of the holes on the golf course are behind trees on our left, while the remaining 16 holes are behind trees on our right.

Croham Hurst



After a while we reach a path junction, where the main bridleway continues straight on, but a couple of smaller paths head off to our left. We have now reached the bottom right-hand corner of the map at the bottom of the previous page. One of John Gannon's waymarking posts, with a red arrow, points the way to the summit of Croham Hurst, some 477 feet above sea level. However, my experience is that most of our run leaders prefer not to follow this arrow, but to continue down the bridleway until we reach a large iron post, dating from 1901, at a point where the bridleway crosses the path leading down to the Golf Club clubhouse and car park. We then turn right onto this narrow path (heading north), where we need to be careful of some prominent tree roots, which are more of a hazard now than they were when Striders began using this path more than 40 years ago. This narrow path used to mark the parish boundary between Croydon and Sanderstead.

Going through the car park, we reach the bottom of Croham Valley Road. We cross this road (carefully) and have a choice of two alternative routes. My preference is to turn left (heading northwest). Just after we have crossed it, the road changes its name to Croham Road. We cross a small road called Bench Field and almost immediately turn right up a small track called Pilgrims Way (see the map below).



Pilgrims Way passes behind what were for many years the playing fields of Croham Hurst Girls' School. In 2008 this school was taken over by the Whitgift Foundation. It subsequently became the Old Palace Junior School, which closed in July 2025. The buildings have been purchased by the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha charity. They are reportedly intended for future educational use.

At the northern end of the old school premises, Pilgrims Way turns left and leads into Melville Avenue. We turn right (heading north) along Melville Avenue until the junction with Coombe Road, where there is a pelican crossing (which is the reason why I prefer this route to John Gannon's alternative route, which is described below). Immediately after we have crossed Coombe Road, we need to cross the tram line (after looking out for oncoming trams) and we are now back in Lloyd Park.

Alternatively, both John Gannon and Debra Bourne prefer to turn right after crossing Croham Valley Road and turn left up the steep gravel path known as Conduit Lane, being careful not to trip over the prominent tree roots in the first section. We pass Ballards Farm Road on our right and follow Conduit Lane all the way to the junction with Coombe Road (which changes its name to Coombe Lane on the eastern side of the junction with Oaks Road). We pass the Coach House Café on our right just before reaching the junction, where we turn right for a few yards to use the traffic island to cross the road safely, then head right down Oaks Road, which is almost directly opposite Conduit Lane.

About 20-30 metres after crossing the tram tracks, we turn left and head down a small lane to enter Lloyd Park halfway along the lowest edge of the field that Ally Whitlock uses for our 6.30 REPS sessions on Tuesdays in summer. We head north across that field, through a tree belt, then diagonally left (heading west) up towards the top of Hammond Hill, just to the east of the Lloyd parkrun turnaround point at the top of the hill. Here we take the path on the right and go along the edge of the field to return to the gate back into the Sandilands clubhouse grounds.

COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2025

In the British Masters Championships at Derby on 14 September, Steve Corfield had an excellent run to place second in the M60 800 metres (2:20.78). In the Vitality 10K, in London on 28 September, Alex Legge set a club W50 record of 47:27.

In the East Surrey League cross-country race at Lloyd Park on 4 October, Striders' men placed third in the team event. James Rhodes was sixth, with Greg Kirby 13th, Rob Lines 19th and Tom Gillespie completing the A team in 23rd. Rachel Lindley ran well to be the third female finisher, with Ally Whitlock eighth.

On 5 October, Striders organised the 31st annual Switchback five-mile race. The first man home was Aaron Truelove of South London Harriers (31:28), while the first woman home was Nikki Sturzaker of Herne Hill, who placed 12th overall (35:41). For Striders, Lee Flanagan was second overall and first in the M50 age-group (32:13). Phil Coales was fourth (33:21), Simon Ambrosi ninth (34:55), Tom Gillespie tenth (35:17) and Kerim Suruliz eleventh (35:38). Striders' women were led by Ally Whitlock, who was the fifth female finisher, placing 35th overall (39:18). Leonie Hondeborg was eleventh (42:00) and Cindy Siu 12th (42:14).

On 11 October, Striders' women placed eleventh out of 15 clubs in their Surrey Cross-Country Division Two match at Richmond Park. They were led by Ally Whitlock who placed 33rd out of 173 finishers, completing the 6600-metre course in 29:11. Consuelo Kennefick was 45th (30:03), Cindy Siu 92nd (33:03), Gemma Halliday 108th (34:36), Debra Bourne 114th (34:59) and Ruth Pearson 148th (38:15).

Striders' men placed third out of ten clubs in their Division Three match at the same venue. They were led by James Rhodes who placed ninth, completing the 8500-metre course in 30:50. Marc Burrows was 23rd (31:50), while Lee Flanagan was second in the M50 age-group and 28th overall (31:58). Phil Coales was 32nd (32:07) and Nathan Robertshaw 42nd (32:48). Krzysztof Klidzia was first in the M60 age-group and 53rd overall (33:48), while Steve Corfield was second in the M60 age-group and 59th overall (34:13). Simon Ambrosi was 70th (34:51), Liam Redmond 73rd (35:10) and Tom Gillespie 74th (35:12).

At Ljubljana in Slovenia on 19 October, Graham Hansen set a club M65 10K record of 42:36.

Steve Corfield ran very well to finish third in the M60 age-group in the Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships at Nonsuch Park on 25 October. David Hoben was ninth in the M70 age-group, while Stephen Siu was 15th in the M40 age-group and Liam Redmond was 17th in the M45 age-group.

In the London Cross-Country Championships, at Parliament Hill on 8 November, Phil Coales placed 129th of the 441 finishers. Tom Gillespie was 213rd and Stephen Siu 375th.

On 15 November, Striders' women placed tenth out of 15 clubs in their Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match at Hurst Green. Rachel Lindley placed 12th of the 179 finishers, completing the six-kilometre course in 25:49. Ally Whitlock was 25th (27:03), Consuelo Kennefick 49th (28:40), Selena Wong 74th (30:22) and Cindy Siu completed the A team in 80th (30:38). For the B team, Debra Bourne was 111th (32:50), Gemma Halliday 117th (33:20), Ellyw Evans 121st (33:42), Linda Jones 137th (34:50), Ruth Pearson 143rd (35:18), Maria Gabriel 146th (35:20) and Jadwiga Brzask-Makiela 173rd (40:27).

Striders' men were fourth out of ten clubs in their Division Three match at the same venue. Phil Coales placed eleventh, completing the eight-kilometre course in 29:06. James Rhodes was 13th (29:19) and Marc Burrows 23rd (30:00). Lee Flanagan was second in the M50 age-group and 30th overall (30:36), while Martin Harrison was 34th (30:45) and Nathan Robertshaw 43rd (31:20). Striders had the first two finishers in the M60 age-group with Steve Corfield 44th overall (31:22) and Krzysztof Klidzia 48th (31:31). Tom Gillespie was 61st (32:21) and Kerim Suruliz 64th (32:37). Striders had a total of 21 finishers.

In the Brighton 10K on 16 November, Keith Simpson set a new club M75 record of 58:19.

On 22 November, Striders' men placed eighth in the South of the Thames Cross-Country Association five-mile race at Lloyd Park. James Rhodes placed 39th, Nathan Robertshaw 46th and Lee Flanagan 51st.

STRIDERS OF CROYDON: A BRIEF HISTORY

Striders were formed in September 1982 by two runners who worked for Philips Electronics, who owned a large TV factory in West Croydon and were one of the borough's largest employers. The club was initially based at Philips' head office (City Link House) and adopted the name 'Philips City Striders'. The initial aim of the club was to help people to train for the 1983 London Marathon, and it did so with success, as it had 16 finishers in the event. The club's first chairman, Steve Owen, instituted a practice of 'looping back' on club runs, so that the slower runners were not left behind. This is still the club's policy.



Mick Meech, Shashi Dave, Ron Carver, Steve Owen, Colin Golding, Myles Mayne
Suzanne Eyre Sandra Owen
Roger Dale Patrick Byrnes

The first Striders team photograph, taken at City Link House in 1983

In September 1983, Striders moved the club headquarters to the CASSAC (Croydon Adult School Social & Athletic Club) building in the south-west corner of Lloyd Park. The club also continued to hold lunchtime runs from the Philips office in West Croydon.

In November 1984, Striders entered a cross-country event for the first time (the London Championships at Parliament Hill). In October 1986 Striders began competing in the Surrey Cross-Country League (which had been formed in 1962), and in October 1990 Striders began competing in the East Surrey League (which had been formed in the 1930s).

In December 1986, Striders began holding club track sessions for the first time. They were organised by John Keen and took place on the synthetic track at Crystal Palace. The sessions were moved to Croydon Arena in the early 1990s, starting at 6pm on Tuesday evenings when the track was not too busy. (The starting time was changed to 7pm in September 1999.)

In 1992 Striders began competing in the newly formed Surrey Road League, which was organised by the Surrey County Athletic Association.

In September 1992, Striders marked the club's tenth anniversary by promoting a race on a multi-terrain course in Lloyd Park and Addington Hills. The race was subsequently named the 'Switchback 5' to highlight the series of short hills which occur partway through the race. The race was held every year from 1992 to 2019: it was revived in 2023 after a three-year gap. For the first ten years, the course was slightly less than the advertised five miles. It was lengthened to become an accurate five miles in September 2002, when John Gannon became the race director.

In June 1995, Striders' members voted to change the club's name from 'Philips City Striders' to 'Croydon Striders'. (Philips had closed its main factory in December 1988: the company had subsequently refused to

give Striders any financial support.) However, another local club objected to Striders' application to register this proposed name with the Surrey County Athletics Association. After negotiations, it was agreed that the club should adopt the name 'Striders of Croydon'.

In April 1996, Striders began competing in the Southern Counties Veterans League. In the Surrey Veterans Championships at Tooting in June 1996, John McGilvray won the M50 800 metres and 1500 metres, while Kevin Burnett won the M55 shot and javelin. They shared the honour of being the first Striders to win gold medals in a Surrey championship.

In May 1997 Striders launched the club's first internet pages (using the website www.surreyweb.org.uk: we moved to www.stridersofcroydon.co.uk in 2002 and to www.stridersofcroydon.org.uk in 2005). 1997 also saw Striders change the club colours from the red, white and blue which the club had worn since 1984, to yellow vests with green side panels (which are still the club colours).

In the Surrey Cross-Country Championships in December 1997, Jane Lansdown placed eighth in the senior women's race. This was the first time that any Strider had finished in the top ten in this event. In March 1998, Jane became the first Strider to represent Surrey in the Inter-Counties Cross-Country Championships.

In February 2001, Striders' women finished second in Division Two of the Surrey Women's Cross-Country League and gained promotion to Division One. This was the first time that Striders' women had gained promotion since the league was originally split into two divisions in 1991. Striders' women spent a total of four years in Division One between 2001/02 and 2010/11, although they have not competed at this level since 2011.

In April 2001 one of Striders' committee members, Mick Gambrill, organised a club trip to Cape Town for the annual Two Oceans Marathon. Striders have subsequently organised several overseas trips, mostly to cities in Europe.



Striders in South Africa in April 2001 (photo by Mick Gambrill)

In May 2001, Striders moved the club headquarters from the old CASSAC pavilion to our current premises at Sandilands. The changing and showering facilities at Sandilands were a significant improvement on what the club's members (particularly the women) had endured at CASSAC. The move required significant revisions to be made to some of the club's training routes for the Wednesday evening road runs.

In April 2003, Striders won the East Surrey League for the first time, finishing just one point ahead of both Epsom and Box Hill Racers. Also in 2003, Striders' men finished fourth in the Surrey Road League, which is still the club's highest placing in this league, and Emma Haillay won the senior women's individual league championship. And Striders' membership reached the three-figure mark for the first time, with a total of 109 members by September 2003.

In 2005 Striders were invited to marshal the London Marathon at Hungerford Bridge. The club have continued to do so ever since. 2005 also saw Striders compete for the first time in the Eastern Division of the Rosenheim League (a track and field league which had been formed in 1964).

In July 2008, Striders' women did very well to finish second in the Rosenheim League Eastern Division. Their leading points-scorer was Yasmin Anderson, who competed in several different events during the season.



Yasmin Anderson competing in the Rosenheim League in 2008 (photo by Robin Jamieson)

In September 2008, Striders' track captain Matt Morgan won the Surrey steeplechase championship, becoming the first Strider to win a senior Surrey track championship. In October 2008, David Batten placed second in the M55 age-group at the Surrey Veterans Cross-Country Championships, becoming the first Strider to win a medal at these championships.

In May 2009, Striders' men finished first out of 40 teams in the Beckenham Relays. The team comprised Matt Morgan, Duncan Lancashire and Justin Macenhill.

In October 2010, Striders were instrumental in setting up the Lloyd parkrun. In 2011 Debra Bourne became the Event Director. Striders were also heavily involved in setting up the parkruns at Roundshaw and at South Norwood Country Park.

In February 2016, Peter Mills won the final Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two race of the season, becoming the first Strider to win a Surrey Cross-Country League race. Later that month, Peter placed 153rd in the senior men's race at the National Cross-Country Championships, which was the first time that a Strider had placed in the top 200 in this event. In March, Peter became the first male Strider to represent Surrey in the Inter-Counties Cross-Country Championships.

In the British Masters Indoor Pentathlon Championships, at Lee Valley in February 2017, Paul Cripps placed second in the M50 event, becoming the first Strider to win a medal in a national championship.

In April 2017, Striders won the East Surrey League for only the second time in the club's history. Individually, Andy Perks won the M40 championship while Matthew Stone won the M50 championship.

Also in 2017, Striders obtained a grant from Croydon Council to mark out three walking and running routes around Lloyd Park, Addington Hills and Croham Hurst. The routes, devised by former club chairman John Gannon, were duly waymarked by the end of March 2018 (see [Striders show the way with three routes round our parks | Inside Croydon](#)).

In February 2018, Striders' men finished second in Division Two of the Surrey Cross-Country League, winning promotion to Division One for the first time. Unfortunately, they were only able to stay in Division One for one season.

In the British Masters Indoor Championships, at Lee Valley in March 2018, Sandra Francis won bronze medals in both the W60 long jump and the W60 hurdles, becoming the first female Strider to finish in the top three in a British championship.

In the Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships, at Nonsuch Park in October 2022, Striders won silver medals in the M60 team competition, which was the first time that Striders had won team medals in any age-group in the Surrey Cross-Country Championships. The team comprised Matthew Stone, Steve Corfield and Jon Dean.

In December 2023, Ally Whitlock was the third woman to finish the Centurion Winter Downs 200-mile race, while Debra Bourne was 12th. Ally became the first Strider to complete a race of 200 miles or more.

In the British Masters 5K road championships, at Battersea in December 2024, Striders' M60 team ran well to place third in their team event. The team comprised Steve Corfield, Graham Hansen and Matthew Stone.



Striders' medal-winning team from the 2024 British Masters 5K (photo by Peter Johnson)

In February 2025, Striders had 70 finishers for the club's annual 'mob match' against Croydon Harriers. This was the largest number of runners which Striders have fielded in any competitive event. In the British Masters Championships at Derby in September 2025, Steve Corfield was second in the M60 800 metres.

20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 2005/06

On 3 December Justin Macenhill ran well to finish second in the annual Pirie 10-mile cross-country race at Coulsdon (60:25). John Foster was 12th (65:00), Dave Batten 17th (66:39) and Chris Morton 22nd (68:39). Kerry Backshell was the seventh woman to finish, placing 60th overall (80:53).

Striders placed fifth in the South of the Thames Cross-Country Championship at Wimbledon on 17 December. Justin Macenhill was 61st (46:41), Scott Antony 104th (49:54), Nigel Davidson 115th (50:41), Paul Finch 117th (51:10), Dave Batten 119th (51:34) and Chris Morton 121st (51:48).

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Lloyd Park on 7 January. Genevieve Gardner of Guildford won the senior women's race, while Ranelagh won the team event. Striders' only competitor was Serena Stracey who placed 47th, completing the five-mile course in 40:33.

The senior men's race was won by John McFarlane of Thames Hare & Hounds, while Herne Hill won the team event. Striders were led by John Foster who placed 73rd, completing the 12-kilometre course in 50 minutes 19. Bob Ewen was 90th (51:26), Chris Morton 112th (53:40), Nigel Davidson 125th (54:27), Richard Edwards 164th (59:09) and Barry Finch completed the scoring team in 165th (59:12). They placed 16th in the team event.

The third Surrey Cross-Country League matches of the season took place on 14 January. Striders' women competed in Division One at Mellow. Their team score of 303 points was their best result of the season, but the A team had to settle for 12th place out of the 15 competing clubs, keeping them in the relegation zone with just one match remaining. Faye Stammers ran well to finish 46th, covering the six-kilometre course in 24:00. She was just one place, and four seconds, ahead of Serena Stracey. Clare McFadzean was 51st (24:12), Kerry Backshell 73rd (24:59), Stephanie Noyce 86th (25:44) and Patricia Edwards 121st (29:36).

Meanwhile Striders' men competed at Lloyd Park, finishing sixth in the match and remaining fifth in the overall Division Two table. Justin Macenhill produced an excellent run to finish eighth, covering the muddy five-mile course in 30:28. Scott Anthony also ran well for 25th (32:05), while Dave Shaw made a welcome return to the team in 44th (33:09). Bob Ewen was 46th (33:14), with John Foster 51st (33:33), Tony Sheppard 58th (33:49), Paul Finch 61st (34:02), Nigel Davidson 67th (34:18), Chris Morton 70th (34:26) and Andy Allison completing the scoring team in 71st (34:36). Striders had a total of 23 finishers.

The East Surrey League held its cross-country relay at Wimbledon Common on 21 January. Epsom won the relay with an aggregate time of 41:29, finishing just one second ahead of Croydon Harriers. Hercules-Wimbledon were third (42:27) and Striders fourth (42:33). Scott Antony took third place on the first leg, which he ran in 10 minutes 27. He was followed by veterans John Foster (10:56) and Nigel Davidson (10:35), both dropping a place to younger opponents. On the final leg Matt Morgan, returning after illness, regained a place with an impressive 10:25, overtaking Herne Hill.

The final Surrey Cross-Country League cross-country races of the season took place on 4 February. Striders' women competed in Division One at Richmond Park. They placed 12th in the match, but unfortunately this was not quite enough to save them from relegation to Division Two. The team was led by Serena Stracey who placed 35th, completing the six-kilometre course in 23:37. Stephanie Noyce was 60th (24:48), Clare McFadzean 69th (25:02), Faye Stammers 70th (25:04) and Steph Upton completed the scoring team in 88th (26:01).

Later in the afternoon, Striders' men competed in their Division Two match at the same venue. Justin Macenhill ran well to finish tenth, completing the five-mile course in 31 minutes 41. Damian Macenhill was 43rd (33:45), just outsprinting Pawel Bal who was 44th (33:46). Matt Morgan was 48th (33:59), John Foster 52nd (34:06), Don Kayum 60th (34:31), Nigel Davidson 76th (35:22), Chris Morton 88th (35:56), Dave Batten 90th (36:06) and Richard Edwards 131st (38:55). Striders finished sixth of the nine competing clubs. They were also sixth in the final Division Two table. Ranelagh won the Division Two title with a total of 731 points, ahead of Stragglers (1456), Dulwich (1568), Hercules-Wimbledon (1622), Epsom (1890), Striders (2037), Croydon Harriers (2135), British Airways (2447) and West 4 Harriers (2494).

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN WINTER 2015/16

In the East Surrey League cross-country race at Wimbledon on 5 December, Striders were led by Simon Pannell who placed 35th, completing the five-mile course in 32:23. Paul Stanford was 56th (35:43), Mick Turner 59th (36:04) and Andy Perks completed the scoring team in 68th (36:43).

In the South of the Thames Cross-Country Championships, at Beckenham on 19 December, Striders did well to place fourth in the 12-to-score competition for the Coleman Cup. Peter Mills led the team in 18th place, completing the 12-kilometre course in 40:06. Krzysztof Klidzia was 66th (43:21), Justin Macenhill 73rd (43:51), Andy Perks 133rd (48:44), Simon Webster 142nd (49:25), Matt Ostrowski 143rd (49:25), Sam O'Dongo 153rd (50:15), Simon Pannell 162nd (50:28), Mick Turner 173rd (50:51), Chris Morton 200th (52:29), Tony Ostrowski 224th (54:58) and Michael Joseph 269th (60:14).

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Dorking on 10 January. The senior men's race was won by Phil Wicks of Belgrave, while Hercules-Wimbledon won the team event. For Striders, Peter Mills had an excellent run to place 12th out of the 231 finishers, covering the muddy 12-kilometre course in 44 minutes 51. This was the best placing any Strider has ever achieved in the senior men's race. Krzysztof Klidzia was 78th (51:20), Justin Macenhill 81st (51:58), Simon Pannell 123rd (54:46), Andy Perks 168th (58:49) and Darren Woods 170th (58:53). The team placed 16th.

James Bennett ran very well to place second in the penultimate Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two match of the season at Reigate on 16 January, covering the undulating nine-kilometre course in 32:12. Peter Mills also ran well to place third (32:22). Krzysztof Klidzia was 30th (35:20), Lee Flanagan 48th (35:59), Justin Macenhill 56th (36:16), Simone Luciani 69th (37:22), Simon Ambrosi 80th (38:06), Simon Pannell 84th (38:16), Barry White 96th (39:18) and Greg Williams 99th (39:29). The team placed eighth.

Earlier in the day, Striders' women placed seventh in their Division Two match on a four-mile course at the same venue. Becky Laurence was 40th (34:41), Katie Chadd 41st (35:02) and Debra Bourne 42nd (35:02). Alice Ewen was 62nd (36:48) and Selena Wong completed the scoring team in 74th (37:31).

In the South of England Cross-Country Championships at Parliament Hill Fields on 30 January, Peter Mills was 72nd in the senior men's race, covering the muddy nine-mile course in 55:06. Krzysztof Klidzia was 469th (66:18), Simon Pannell 532nd (68:04), Darren Jackson 623rd (70:10), Greg Williams 624th (70:10) and Andy Perks 673rd (71:18). Striders' women were led by Steph Upton, who placed 259th, covering the five-mile course in 41:23. Becky Laurence also ran well to place 287th (42:24) with Selena Wong 368th (45:49) and Carolyn Storey 394th (47:01).

Peter Mills led Striders to victory in our third annual mob match against local rivals Croydon Harriers, held in conjunction with the Lloyd parkrun on 6 February. Peter was over a minute clear of his nearest rival, recording 17:33. Striders mustered a total of 54 finishers, compared with 21 Harriers.

Peter Mills produced an excellent run to win the final Surrey Cross-Country League Division Two race of the season at Lloyd Park on 13 February. He became the first Strider ever to win a Surrey League race, covering the muddy five-mile course in 28:58. Club colleague James Bennett also ran well to place third (29:44). Lee Flanagan was 24th (31:39), Krzysztof Klidzia 31st (32:08), Phil Coales 49th (33:00), Justin Macenhill 52nd (33:10), Simon Ambrosi 71st (33:48), Greg Williams 95th (35:03), Barry White 98th (35:11) and Graeme Drysdale completed the scoring team in 100th (35:14). Striders placed fifth, which was their best performance of the season, but were relegated to Division Three, finishing ninth overall.

Earlier in the day Striders' women were competing in their Division Two match at Richmond Park. Steph Upton placed 34th, completing the five-mile course in 36:58. Becky Laurence was 40th (37:25), Debra Bourne 48th (38:11), Amanda Barros 80th (41:48) and Selena Wong completed the scoring team in 94th (42:27). They placed eleventh in the final league table.

Peter Mills had another very good run in the National Cross-Country Championship at Donington on 27 February. He placed 153rd of the 1700 finishers, which was the first time that a Strider had placed in the top 200 in this prestigious event.



Krzysztof Klidzia in the South of England Cross-Country Championships in January 2016



Striders' women pictured before the South of England Cross-Country Championships at Parliament Hill Fields in January 2016. Left to right: Victoria Legge, Allie Cairnie, Becky Laurence, Carolyn Storey, Selena Wong, Steph Upton, Adele Boesinger, Isabelle Kita

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 078 5326 8495

alandolton@yahoo.co.uk

70 WARREN ROAD, ADDISCOMBE, CROYDON, CR0 6PF

DISCOUNTED RATES FOR STRIDERS OF CROYDON

BeaMyCoach

Running Injuries? Niggles? New running challenges ahead?

Offering

+ Exercise Rehabilitation

+ Strength & Conditioning for Runners

+ Running Technique Assessments (treadmill & outdoors)

+ Mental Skills Development for Sports

Located at 9 Spitfire Park, CR0 4WD (Purley Way) or ONLINE

Call or text 07984 052823 or e-mail bschaerdc@yahoo.co.uk

PERSONAL TRAINING ALSO AVAILABLE

Andy's Photos

Sporting and Special events photographs.

These photos make great presents or raffle prizes.

e.g. Athletics, Football, Rugby, Tennis, Cycling and many more.

Please email any enquiries to: lorrainehunte.23@gmail.com