

Striders of Croydon

SEPTEMBER 2026 MAGAZINE



Ally Whitlock after setting a new club 50km record at the South Downs Way on 13 June

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 10 October – Surrey Cross-Country League – Reigate

Saturday 24 October – Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships – Nonsuch Park

Saturday 14 November – Surrey Cross-Country League – venue tbc

2027

Saturday 9 January – Surrey Cross-Country Championships – Lloyd Park

Saturday 16 January – Surrey Cross-Country League – Oxshott

Saturday 13 February – Surrey Cross-Country League – Lloyd Park



Striders' team at the Richmond 10K on 21 June

EDITORIAL: SEPTEMBER 2026

Welcome to the September issue of our club magazine.

Earlier this year, Steve Smith ran a half-marathon in the heat of Dubai, and we begin this issue with his account of this race. We follow this with an article from former Strider Juan Galvan about the benefits of sports massage. We also include a book review, and our usual “competitive highlights” and history articles. The ‘40 years ago’ article is a reminder that it was in October 1986 that Striders first competed in the Surrey Cross-Country League. The ‘30 years ago’ article is a reminder of just how much the club has grown in the last 30 years: in September 1996, we only had 44 members, and only seven of these were female.

In the Surrey Road League, our men did well to place ninth out of the 36 clubs in the league. Our women suffered from a lack of numbers and finished 25th, which was disappointing after having finished ninth in 2025. I hope that more of our women will be willing to compete in the Surrey Cross-Country League races, which resume in October.

At track and field, we again had some good performances in the older age-groups, with several new club age-group records and with six Striders (all aged over 50) winning gold medals in the Surrey Masters Championships.

Before the opening Surrey Cross-Country League races, we will again be promoting our annual ‘Switchback’ race in Lloyd Park and Addington Hills on Sunday 4 October. This is a valuable fund-raiser for the club, and those Striders who do not share our run leaders’ enthusiasm for running up steep hills will be very welcome to help marshal the course.

As most Striders will know, many races have a ‘search by club’ option on the results section of their website. However, looking at some recent race results indicates that it is worth reminding some of our members that they should include the club’s name ‘Striders of Croydon’ when entering races, particularly if they would like their performances to be included in our annual road rankings or in our weekly press reports. And it may also be worth reminding members that there is a form on our website (<http://www.stridersofcroydon.org.uk/races/results/>) which members can use to submit results of any races outside the Croydon area.

I hope that all Striders continue to enjoy their running.

Alan



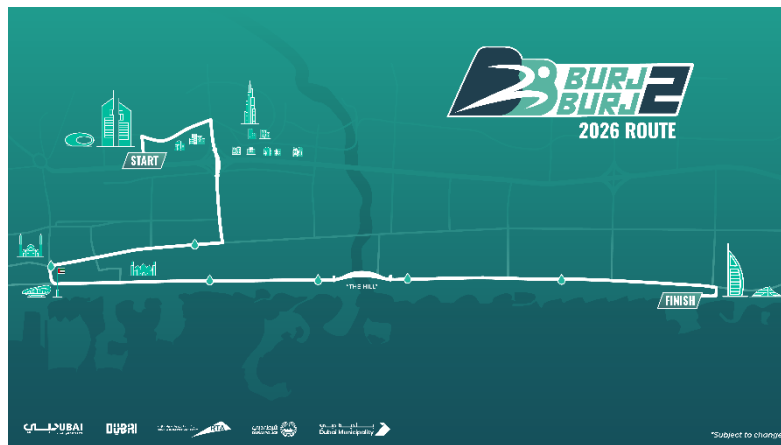
THE BURJ TO BURJ HALF-MARATHON: DUBAI (by Steve Smith)

My eldest daughter is currently living and working in Dubai. We visited in March 2025 and planned to do so again in early 2026. As often happens these days, a post relating to a Dubai half marathon appeared on my timeline, with a race date of 8th February 2026.

The course is described as mainly flat and the temperature in early February isn't too hot, especially early in the day. We decided to make our trip a couple of weeks earlier than the previous year and to register to take advantage of an early bird offer. My daughter is a keen triathlon participant at the sprint event, but I eventually persuaded her to enter as well for her first ever half.

2025 was the third edition of the Burj to Burj. It does exactly what it says on the tin. The race begins at the iconic Jumeirah Emirates Towers and finishes on the beach at the Burj Al Arab. The distance between the two, as the crow flies is 16 kms, so you do run away from the Burj Al Arab for a while before turning back for a very long home stretch. There is a three-hour cut off to be aware of.

Entry was straightforward and cost around £50. A very decent medal and Asics branded shirt was on offer with a large Expo event with a bulging goodie bag. Sounded good.



I upped my training so that I was running longer distances again, so was pretty confident I could complete the distance in hopefully just under 2 hours. I had completed a full marathon around Crystal Palace Park in October, so hoped that the benefits of that were still present.

We arrived in Dubai on the Thursday before the race and were renting an Air BnB in the same block as my daughter, which made life easier to meet up with and travel to the Expo and race together. Fortunately the apartment is near a park, so I was able to get out and stretch the legs in the days before the race.

The Expo opens on Thursday and runs through until Saturday. We decided to go on Saturday morning. The Expo was impressive. Bib pick up was straightforward and quick and there were plenty of useful goodies on offer. I even met and spoke to some of the elite runners, including Alex Bell from the UK and Joshua Cheptegei, the eventual winner, there. It useful to note that the official language for the communications, signage and support is English. It's a truly international race with over 170 different nationalities participating.

Rising at 4.30am on race morning (Sunday) wasn't ideal, but we needed to be at the Burj start point by 6am to access our respective start pens. It was still dark but a pleasant 18 degrees when we set off at 6.30am. I got away well and into a steady 5.40mins per km pace, although the tall buildings in the early stages did spook the Garmin. Once the darkness lifted, we saw the sunrise over the city and made our way through the kms. Hydration stations were placed every 2.5-3kms and were well stocked. There was an army of authorised pacers running and I hitched onto a sub 2-hour one for a large part of the run.

Out on the course were numerous cheer stations, including at one point a troop of pipers.

The kilometers kept coming along what seemed an endless straight road, which it was. We hit the main hill, a long bridge over the main canal, at 12kms. I was still feeling good at that point, although the temperature was beginning to ramp up. I saw a few casualties in the later kms by the side of the road receiving medical attention.

I was still on schedule for a sub 2-hour run, but the increasing mileage, early start and lack of a change of gradient, were taking their toll. I could see the finish point, but it didn't appear to be getting any closer. I dug in for the last few kms and felt the cramp twinges beginning to set in, so remained disciplined and kept the pace at the same constant level.

Finally, I took the final corner and saw other members of the family and had a final 200 metres push to the finish. I finished in 1:57:35 (37th in my 5-year age band), 3,637 out of the 15,000 plus that registered. I was happy with that. The finish area was busy and there were several ambulances dealing with those who required medical attention. I hung around the finish until my daughter came through in 2:17. She looked strong coming through the finish and was happy with the result.



We met up with the rest of the family and headed 100 yards or so to the Sunset Beach Finish Village where the post-race goodies including free Corona zero and other freebies were on offer and the presentations were being made.

Overall, a well organised race, which offers decent value for your money. We had heard that the start had been somewhat chaotic in 2025, but they seem to have resolved the issue well. We had a further week in Dubai and then returned home. War broke out just a few days later. The 2027 date for this race is 24th January and registration is open. We may be back.

THE BENEFITS OF SPORTS MASSAGE (by Juan Galvan)

As sporting standards continue to improve, the intensity of training methods increases accordingly. Nowadays the amateur athlete may train as much as the top professionals did a decade ago, but there is a price to be paid for such a high level of effort.

The body needs to rest to enable it to recover from the fatigue which results from hard training, and to enable it to develop the resilience necessary to achieve increased performance. As training builds up progressively, a point is reached where the body is no longer able to fully recover between sessions, and performance may level off and eventually start to decline. The symptoms of incomplete recovery are muscle pain, joint pain and tendon inflammation, which all point to the onset of injury through overtraining. Other tell-tale signs are restlessness and difficulty in sleeping caused by physical tension and general aches and pains.

When the musculoskeletal system is being over-trained in this way it becomes vulnerable to trauma; this is why you hear of young athletes breaking down when following seemingly normal training schedules, suffering from acute conditions like severe muscle strain, joint sprain and even stress fractures. All of these seldom happen by accident and could have been avoided with a more comprehensive approach to recovery.

With only 24 hours in the day, and the increasing pressure that the everyday keen sportsman has to contend with, full recovery may not be possible unless the effectiveness of the rest periods is improved.

We all know the importance of a good warm-up/warm-down and stretching, and these should be an integral part of a training programme. However, in spite of doing these exercises properly there may still be muscle tension that will stop you recovering fully.

Stretching tends to work the muscle group (quadriceps, hamstrings, etc) as a whole. But muscle does not work as a single unit in this way. It is divided into many sub-compartments, each of which work with different effort to produce the complexity of movement required.

Runners, due to the demands of their sport, put their bodies through stresses that render them prone to injury including shin splints, tight quadriceps, pulled hamstrings and knee problems.

Massage is therefore used for the general relaxation of the musculoskeletal system as well as being directed into local pressure areas, thereby improving recovery and ensuring that injuries are treated thoroughly.

The athlete should be aware of the uses and benefits of massage. All sporting activities involve muscle activity as the primary motive force, and many sports injuries are directly muscle injuries or originate from muscle dysfunction. Massage is the best form of treatment for muscle tension. It has a distinct advantage over most therapies in that it can be used on a regular basis to help prevent overuse injuries as well as being used as a diagnostic approach for the treatment of specific injuries. With massage the therapist can remove the accumulation of general aches and pains that some athletes seem to either accept as normal due to their gradual build-up, or even to try to suppress with drugs. These aches and pains can lead to more serious problems if left untreated. So, the benefits of massage for injury prevention are great.

Through massage the therapist is acutely aware of any changes through the feeling in the hands and so can adapt the treatment accordingly to the individual.

Massage provides other physiological processes which are important to the competitive runner at any level:

- Aids the removal of waste toxins from swollen muscles, e.g. lactic acid that is built up from going to oxygen debt.
- Boosts the immune system by promoting better circulation of the lymph our body has in order to fight infections.
- Improves the circulation from the heart to the muscles, which means blood can be pumped more effectively to the working muscles on demand.
- Extends muscular range of motion, increasing flexibility, which ensures a more effective working muscle that is less likely to get injured.

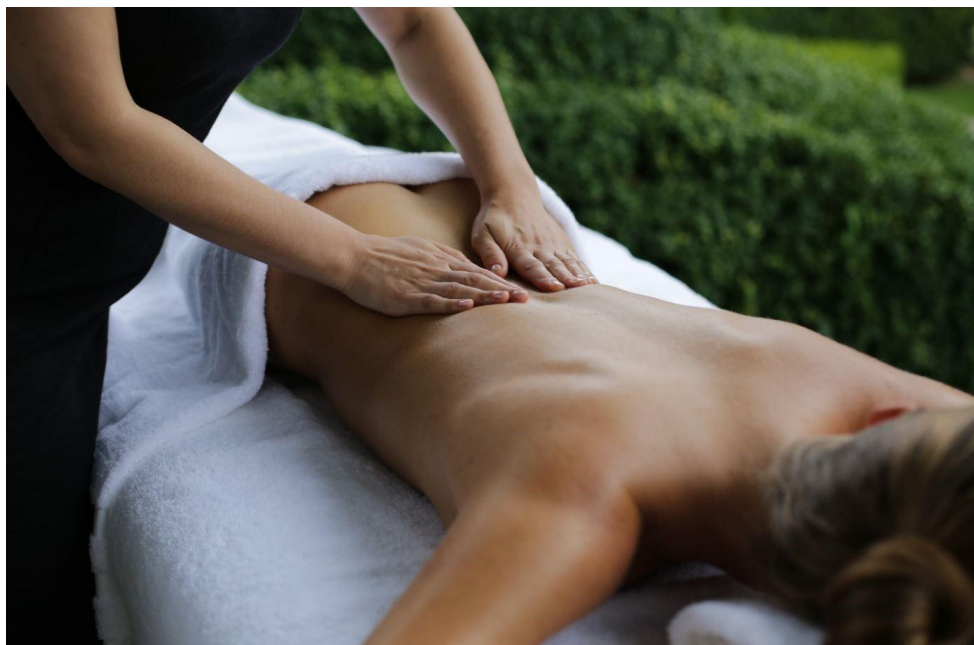
- Reduces pain: with intensive training one tends to get excessive muscle tension which restricts circulation and shortens muscles, which all lead to pain. Massage stimulates the production of endorphins – the body's own painkillers.
- Balances the autonomous nervous system, reducing muscle tension and abolishing pain due to musculoskeletal disorders, especially in the neck. This has been shown to decrease the recurrence of migraine attacks and lower high blood pressure; it also helps in better relaxation and improves sleep, releasing stress.
- Improves muscle tone, by combining the improvement in circulation with the physical manipulation of the muscle, by breaking down scar tissue as well as by removing any adhesions that would otherwise hinder the full function of the muscle, giving it a better shape in the process.

Massage is very important for athletes that are recovering from accidents or injuries that have rendered a particular muscle inactive for a long time. Massage work carried out during this recovery stage will allow the muscle to regain full strength, flexibility and function.

(This article originally appeared in the June 1996 club magazine. Juan was one of Striders' leading runners in the early 1990s, and was the first Strider to train at the London School of Sports Massage)



The London School of Sports Massage premises in Regent's Park



BOOK REVIEW: BORN TO RUN

(by Christopher McDougall: reviewed by Alan Dolton)

It might seem strange to be publishing a review, in 2026, of a book which first appeared seventeen years ago, in 2009. Indeed, my excuse for not having published such a review in my first two or three years as editor of this magazine was precisely that I assumed that most people interested in long-distance running would already have read it. But when Ally Whitlock recommended this book as lockdown reading in the club's Facebook group in 2020, it became clear that many Striders had not in fact read it: and the fact that it is still available on the shelves of Smiths and Waterstones, long after most books published seventeen years ago have been 'remaindered', is a testament to its continuing popularity.

The book is non-linear in its arrangement (and was criticised for this in a review in the 'Washington Post'). It begins with McDougall looking for a legendary long-distance runner nicknamed 'Caballo Blanco' (which is Spanish for 'White Horse'), who had been living with the Tarahumara, a tribe from the Chihuahua area of Mexico who themselves had a legendary reputation as long-distance runners. Tarahumara runners had represented Mexico in the Olympic marathons of 1928 and 1968, but had finished outside the medals on each occasion, and it had subsequently been accepted that a mere 26 miles was much too short a distance for them.

In the second chapter, McDougall explains that in 2001, he began suffering from foot pain which severely restricted his running. At the time, McDougall weighed more than 16 stone, so he was rather heavier than most Striders. Two years later, he read a magazine article about the Tarahumara. He was intrigued that they appeared to be able to run long distances without injury and while wearing minimalist sandals on their feet. He commented that "it's as if a clerical error entered the stats in the wrong columns: shouldn't we – the ones with state of the art running shoes and custom-made orthotics – have the zero casualty rate, and the Tarahumara – who run way more, on way rockier terrain, in shoes that barely qualify as shoes – be constantly banged up?"



The Tarahumara wear minimalist sandals on their feet

McDougall persuaded 'Runner's World' magazine to commission him to trek into the northern Mexican barrancas in search of the Tarahumara. He duly meets 'Caballo Blanco', who tells him about Rick Fisher, a photographer from Arizona who had taken an interest in the Tarahumara in the early 1990s. Fisher had persuaded some of the Tarahumara to compete in the Leadville 100-mile trail race, a notoriously difficult race at high altitude in Colorado. In 1993 Tarahumara runners finished first and second in this race. The 1994 race saw the Californian runner Ann Trason, well-known for finishing as the first woman in the Western States 100-mile trail race for ten successive years (1989 to 1998), run at Leadville. She took an

early lead, bidding to become the first woman to win the race outright. In a classic duel, which McDougall describes at length, she was overtaken by the Tarahumara runner Juan Herrera, who went on to win the race, beating the previous course record by 25 minutes. Trason was second, 36 minutes behind him: her time still stands as the women's course record.



Ann Trason, the leading female American ultra-distance runner of the 1990s



The Tarahumara runner Maria Lorena Ramirez, racing in 2018

Caballo explains that he had befriended Herrera's team-mate Martimano Cervantes in Leadville shortly before the race, in which Cervantes finished third. After the race, he had followed the Tarahumara into northern Mexico. After several years of living there, he had decided that he would like to promote a long-distance race which would enable the best Tarahumara runners to compete against leading North American runners such as Scott Jurek, who had won the Western States 100-mile trail race for seven consecutive years from 1999 to 2005.

The central part of the book describes the build-up to the race, known as the Copper Canyon Ultra-Marathon, which took place in March 2006. One slight criticism of McDougall's book is that he does not indicate that this was the fourth time Caballo had organised this race, but that for the first three races, from 2003 to 2005, only Tarahumara runners had taken part: the 2006 race was the first time that runners from the USA had been invited to take part.

Scott Jurek was easily the best-known and most successful competitor among the group of North American runners. However, the group also included Ted McDonald, who is referred to by his nickname of 'Barefoot Ted' and was the first runner to be sponsored by Vibram Five Fingers (a well-known manufacturer of minimalist shoes). McDougall quotes the Stanford University coach Vin Lananna as telling Nike executives that "when my runners train barefoot, they run faster and suffer fewer injuries ... people went thousands of years without shoes. I think you try to do all these corrective things with shoes and you overcompensate. You fix things that don't need fixing. If you strengthen the foot by going barefoot, I think you reduce the risk of Achilles and knee and plantar fascia injuries."

The group was mostly male, but included one talented female runner, Jenn Shelton. McDougall observes that "Jenn could run a sub-three-hour marathon while wearing a string bikini and chugging a beer at mile 23": this is a reference to the 2007 Frederick Marathon in Maryland, when she forgot to pack her racing kit, but still finished as the first woman, racing in her bikini and setting a women's course record of 2 hours 53.



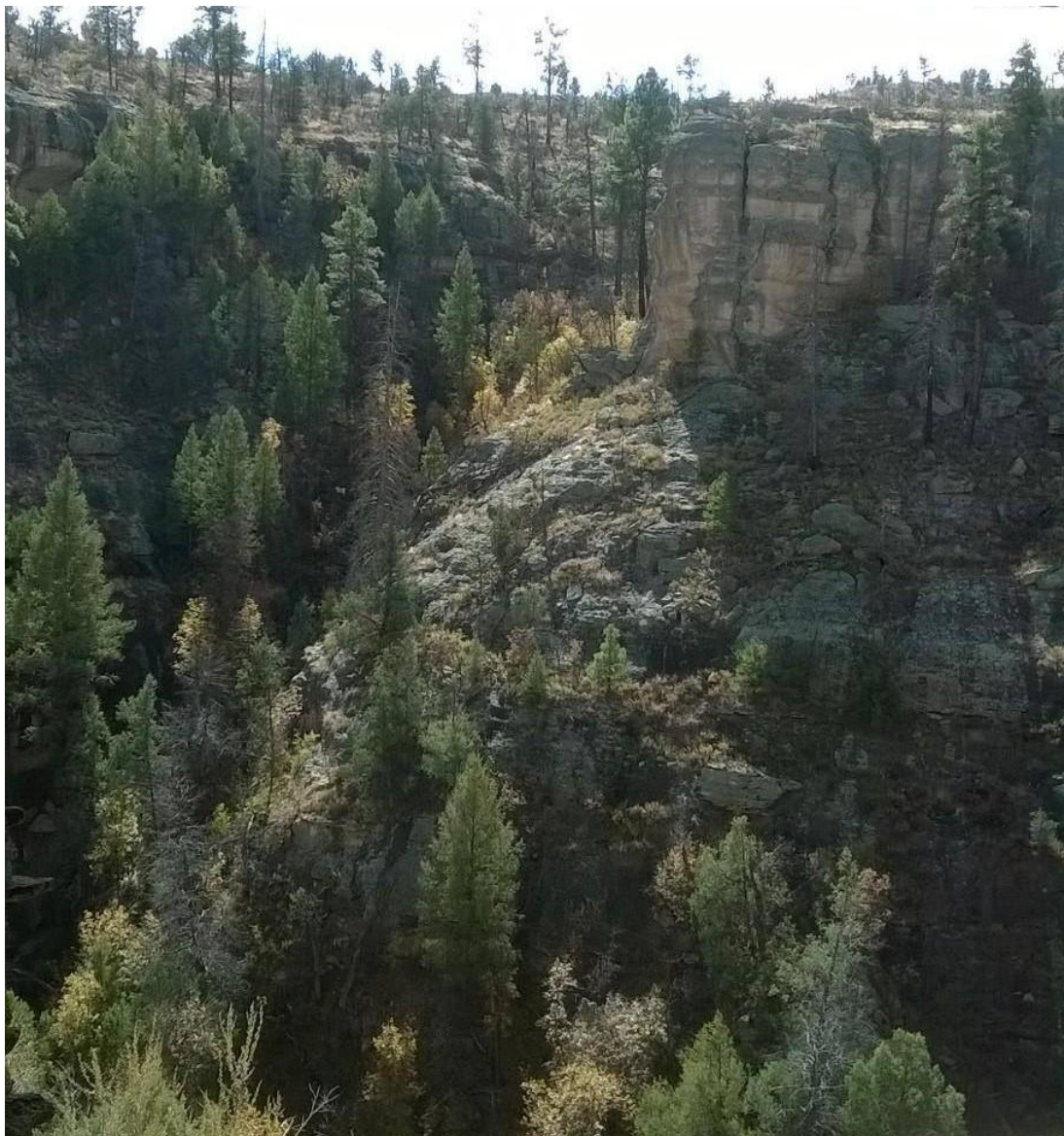
Jenn Shelton, pictured after setting a course record in the Frederick Marathon

Chapter 31 of the book contains a well-written description of the 2006 Copper Canyon Ultra-Marathon. For the benefit of those Striders who haven't yet read the book, I won't reveal who wins the race, or how the various North American runners (including McDougall himself) fare. In the following chapter, Caballo finally reveals his background to McDougall. His original name was Michael Hickman, and he had been a boxer before discovering running. At the time McDougall met him, he was spending two or three months each year in Colorado, making some money through furniture removals, and spending the rest of the year in northern Mexico.

Although the race described in the book took place in 2006, the book was not published until 2009. Both Jurek and Shelton continued to run at a high standard: in 2010, Jurek set a United States 24-hour record of 165.7 miles, which remained a US record until 2012. Shelton competed in the 2012 US Olympic Marathon Trials: however, she suffered a hamstring injury and failed to finish. Shelton was very critical of McDougall, considering that his book had romanticised the Tarahumara lifestyle and had not adequately described their poverty. On a sadder note, 2012 was also the year in which Hickman was found dead, after going missing on a training run in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.

The book is not a totally reliable source of training advice, because McDougall sometimes allows his enthusiasm to run away with him. For example, chapter 28 makes the bizarre claim that “an elite marathon runner can jog for hours at six meters a second”. This is simply wrong: at six metres per second, a runner would run 10 kilometres in slightly under 28 minutes (which is not jogging pace even for runners as talented as Eliud Kipchoge) and would run a half-marathon in less than an hour.

This book did not convert me into an ultra-distance runner: I have never run a race which took more than four hours and still have no desire to do so. But I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book, and it certainly made me to want to continue being a runner. I have no hesitation in recommending it to those Striders who have not yet read it.



The Gila National Forest, where Michael Hickman (aka Caballo Blanco) was found dead in 2012

(This article previously appeared in the June 2021 club magazine, but is republished here – in a slightly revised form – for the benefit of newer Striders)

COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE-AUGUST 2026

Both Striders' men and women placed fourth in their Rosenheim League match at Tooting on 3 June. Phil Coales placed second in the men's 400 metres (55.70) and third in the 3000 metres (9:20.59). Selena Wong was third in both the women's long jump (2.91) and the 800 metres (3:17.04).

The Dorking 10-mile road race, on 7 June, incorporated the Surrey Championships. Consuelo Kennefick was the 26th woman to finish (71:45), with Cindy Siu 76th (84:04). For Striders' men, Martin Harrison was 50th (61:29), Erik Schrijnemaekers 95th (65:53), Tom Gillespie 97th (66:25) and Tim Lawlor 148th (71:07).

In the Centurion South Downs Way 50K, on 13 June, Ally Whitlock was the seventh woman to finish, placing 37th overall out of 305 finishers and setting a new club record of 4:42:03.

The Ranelagh Richmond 10K, on 21 June, incorporated the Surrey Championships. Consuelo Kennefick was the 44th woman to finish, setting a club W50 record of 43:50. For Striders' men, Phil Coales was 48th (37:42), Steve Corfield 79th (39:13), Erik Schrijnemaekers 104th (40:23) and Tom Gillespie 116th (40:51).

The second Southern Veterans League match of the season took place at Ewell on 22 June. Steve Corfield won the M60 800 metres (2:22.7). Sam O'Dongo won the M50 200 metres in a club age-group record of 25.7. There were third places for Jon Dean in the M60 200 metres (33.6), Peter Johnson in the M60 3000 metres (11:52.3), Sandra Francis in the W60 long jump (2.33) and Vanessa Wheeler in the W60 shot (4.37). Striders' women placed eighth in the match, while their men were ninth.

On 27 June, Striders had 61 finishers in the Lloyd parkrun mob match against Croydon Harriers. Consuelo Kennefick was the first female finisher (23:20). Striders' men were led by Simone Luciani who placed fourth overall (19:21). Under the 'Thornbury' method, whereby all 95 of the clubs' finishers score, Striders won by 2707 points to 1853. Under the 'equal numbers' method, scoring 34-a-side, Striders won by 1303 to 1043.

The Ranelagh Harriers Sunset Sprint 3K road race at Petersham, on 3 July, was the seventh race in this year's Surrey Road League. Phil Coales placed 36th (9:52) with Erik Schrijnemaekers 100th (11:12).

In the Southern Veterans League match at Carshalton on 6 July, Sam O'Dongo won the M50 200 metres (25.8), the M50 800 metres (2:28.4) and the M50 high jump (1.40). Steve Corfield won the M60 800 metres (2:21.9) and was second in the M50 1500 metres (4:55.1). Paul Cripps won the M60 high jump with a club age-group record of 1.40. He was also second in the M60 javelin (23.55). James Harrison won the M35 2000 metre walk (14:37.0). Striders' men placed fourth in the match, while their women were seventh.

In the Rosenheim League match at Tooting on 8 July, Striders' women placed third, while their men were fifth. Selena Wong was third in both the women's 800 metres (3:22.82) and the long jump (2.97).

The Elmbridge 10K, on 19 July, was the final race in this year's Surrey Road League. James Rhodes placed 37th (36:21), Steve Corfield 75th (38:18), Erik Schrijnemaekers 105th (39:55) and Tom Gillespie 142nd (41:32). The team placed eighth. In the final league tables, Striders' men placed ninth out of 36 clubs, while their women placed 25th. Individually, Steve Corfield was second in the M55 age-group.

The final Southern Veterans League match of the season was at Wimbledon on 27 July. Steve Corfield placed second in both the M60 400 metres (62.02) and the M60 3000 metres (11:02.90). Lorraine Hunte was third in the W60 100 metres (17.68). Both Striders' men and women placed eighth in the match. In the final league table, Striders' men were seventh while their women were eighth.

In the Rosenheim Shield Final, at Kingsmeadow on 29 July, Striders' women placed ninth. Vanessa Wheeler was third in the shot (4.72) and fifth in the 800 metres (3:32.12).

On 2 August, Ally Whitlock was the first woman to finish the Vanguard Way Marathon, placing second overall (4:15:20). On 30 August, Stephen Harris won the Woldingham Marathon, completing the undulating course in 4:00:47. On 31 August, Debra Bourne completed the 185-mile King Offa's Dyke race, starting at Chepstow and finishing at Prestatyn in North Wales, in 83 hours 37.

40 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN JULY-DECEMBER 1986

Eleven Striders ran in the Horsham 10-mile road race on 13 July. They were led by Steve Harman who placed 84th in 59:09, while Nigel Davidson was 99th (60:03). Striders' first woman to finish was Michele Lawrence (80:47).

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

On 24 August, Croydon Harriers' ultra-distance runner James Zarei won a 24-hour road race at Chorley, recording a new personal best of 162 miles 454 yards. On 5 September he won a 50-mile road race at Tipperary, recording a new personal best of 5:40:15.

South London Harriers held their annual 30-mile road race at Coulsdon on 6 September. The winner was Alan McGee of GEC Avionics (2:58:04). The first local runner was Don Claxton of Herne Hill, who placed fifth (3:08:07). Don continued to run for many years; in 2023, at the age of 85, he ran the South Norwood parkrun in 29:52, and in 2026, at the age of 88, he ran the Morden parkrun in 41:46.

The first woman to finish the SLH 30 was Hilary Walker of Serpentine (3:42:28), while Jackie Ostergaard of Croydon was fourth (4:06:54), taking first place in the W40 age-group.

On 28 September, Blackheath Harriers organised a 25 x 1 mile relay at Crystal Palace. Belgrave won with Blackheath second and Croydon Harriers third. Croydon's team included three future Striders: Alan Dolton ran 4:24, while Peter Yarlett ran 4:35 and Graham Hansen ran 4:39.

The annual London to Brighton 52-mile road race took place on 5 October. James Zarei placed fourth (6:05:57), while his Croydon Harriers team-mate Dave Bryant was 40th (7:07:20).

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 25th season with matches on 11 October. Aldershot won the Division One match at Wimbledon Common, while Ranelagh won the Division Two match at Guildford, led by 1982 London Marathon champion Hugh Jones.

The Division Three match took place at Epsom Downs. The individual winner was Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles, who finished more than a minute clear of his nearest rival. Epsom won the team event with Mitcham second. This match saw Striders make their debut in the league. They mustered an encouraging total of 15 runners.



Standing (left to right) --- Simon Morris, Dave MacDonald, Tony Smith, Ron Carver, Allan Day, Darren Ennor, Colin Golding, Steve Page, Dave Langley, Len Picott, Peter Jeal.
Kneeling --- Steve Harman, Simon Smith, Steve Owen, and Nigel Davidson.

Croydon Harriers' annual road race took place on 19 October. It was held over 10 kilometres for the first time, replacing the previous distance of ten miles which had been used since the race began in 1981. The course was significantly hillier than the two-lap course which had been used previously. The race continued to start in Oaks Road and finish in John Ruskin School (which was subsequently demolished in 1991: Postmill Close has been built on the site). The route was lengthened by including the uphill climb from Lower Addiscombe Road to Grimwade Avenue for the first time (going up Mapledale Avenue).

The first two finishers were both members of Croydon Harriers, and both subsequently joined Striders. Graham Hansen gained a comfortable win in 31:26, with Alan Dolton second in 32:07. Francis Upcott of South London Harriers was third in 32:47. The first Strider to finish was Nigel Davidson, who placed 27th (34:52). Club colleague Simon Smith was 70th (36:52). The first woman was Jeanette Yeoell of Bromley Ladies, who ran 38:27.



The course used for the Croydon 10K from 1986 to 1991

Surrey Beagles (who no longer exist) staged their third annual ten-mile road race at Coulsdon on 9 November. Colin Walker of Gateshead won in a course record of 49:03, with Bob Treadwell of Surrey Beagles second (49:49). Croydon Harriers won the team event: their team comprised Graham Hansen (8th, 52:56), Alan Dolton (11th, 53:48), Don Faircloth (16th, 55:04) and Robin Dickson (21st, 56:01). Striders had an impressive total of 21 finishers, led by Nigel Davidson who placed 40th (57:13). Striders' Debbie Picott was the fifth woman to finish (67:11).

In the second Surrey Cross-Country League Division Three match of the season, at Mitcham on 22 November, Striders did very well to place fourth.

December 1986 saw Striders hold club track sessions for the first time: they were organised by John Keen and took place on the synthetic track at Crystal Palace.

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Frimley on 13 December. The senior men's race was won by John Gladwin of Belgrave, who completed the undulating six-mile course in 32:33. Croydon Harriers were led by future Strider Graham Hansen, who placed 39th (35:26). Don Faircloth was 47th (35:52), Ian Statter 54th (36:08) and Julian Dillow 65th (36:35). Croydon's team was completed by two more future Striders, with Alan Dolton 67th (36:41) and Peter Yarlett 79th (37:27). They placed ninth in the team event. No Striders competed.

The senior women's race was won by Samantha Baines of Aldershot, who completed the four-mile course in 23:15. Shireen Bailey of Bromley Ladies was second (23:46). The first Croydon Harrier was Juliet Waters (now known as Juliet Cleghorn) who placed 17th (26:56). Rochelle Fairchild was 31st (28:15), while future Strider Heather Fenton was 37th (29:37). They placed seventh in the team event. Karen Sutton won the under-17 women's race, and led Croydon to victory in the team event, with Cathy Enright placing eighth and Claire Moss ninth.

30 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1996

On 19 September, the prolonged saga of Striders' change of club name was finally resolved when UK Athletics recognised the club's new name of 'Striders of Croydon'. Stuart Driver, in his final editorial in the club's newsletter, commented that "whilst it is known that the new name is not universally popular amongst Strider members, and in some opinions represents a compromise too far, it has at least drawn a curtain over a long, messy and totally unnecessary episode in the club's history".

Striders' AGM took place a week later, on 26 September. For the first (and, so far, the only) time in the club's history, there was a contested election for the post of chairman. David Hoben was re-elected by a majority vote. Club secretary Nigel Davidson reported that the club membership had risen during the year from 40 to 44 (37 male, 7 female). 29 of the 44 members attended the club AGM. The AGM also agreed that the club committee should consider a change to the long-standing club colours of red, white and blue, and should put forward alternative proposals to the membership in due course.

Striders held their fifth annual Switchback race on 28 September. The race was dominated by local runners, with 11 Striders and four Croydon Harriers in the first 20. The race was won by Barry Cooke of Croydon Harriers (28:59). Striders had the next two finishers with Lee Morgan second (29:36) and Eric Parker third (30:13). Harriers' Gary Shapland was fourth (30:51), but Striders' Simon Alexander placed fifth (31:11) and Dave Langley seventh (31:26) to ensure that Striders won the team event. Harriers' Keith Brown was eighth (31:44) with club colleague Alan Dolton 11th (32:18). Striders had seven of the next eight finishers: 12 Gerry Crispie 32:26; 13 Nigel Davidson 32:39; 14 Colin Golding 33:06; 15 John McGilvray 34:06; 17 Mick Gambrell 34:42; 18 Richard Smith 34:48; 19 Stuart Millington 34:53. The first woman to finish was Viv Mitchell of South London Harriers, who placed 16th overall (34:15). Elene Kayum of Striders was the second woman to finish, placing 33rd overall (38:29), while Barbara Cole was 40th (40:04) and Wendy Smith 60th (48:29). 65 runners finished.

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 35th season with matches on 19 October. Striders competed in Division Three at Epsom Downs. The team placed fourth, led by second-claim member Juan Galvan who ran very well to finish fourth. Lee Morgan also ran well to finish ninth with Dave Langley 20th, Eric Parker 21st, Tony Sheppard 23rd and club secretary Nigel Davidson 38th.

On the same day, Striders' women competed in their Surrey Women's League Division Two match at Reigate. New member Samantha Harle made an outstanding debut, finishing seventh. Sadly, this was her only league race for the club.

The East Surrey League held its annual cross-country race at Lloyd Park on 26 October. Paul Haywood of Box Hill won the race and led his club to victory in the team event, with Dorking second. Striders had the satisfaction of placing third, just ahead of local rivals Croydon Harriers. Both clubs scored 56 points, but Striders' final scorer was 18th while Harriers' final scorer was 22nd. For Striders, Juan Galvan was seventh with Lee Morgan 14th, Tony Sheppard 17th and Eric Parker 18th.

The second Surrey Cross-Country League races of the season took place on 16 November. Striders' men placed third in their match at Reigate. Lee Morgan placed 13th with Eric Parker 14th, Tony Sheppard 27th, Simon Alexander 29th and Nigel Davidson 33rd. Meanwhile Striders' women were 11th in their match at Richmond Park. They were led by Elene Kayum who placed 26th, with Barbara Cole 39th, Linda Daniel 60th, Sandra Johnson 77th and Wendy Smith 95th.

The Surrey Cross-Country Championships took place at Coulsdon on 16 December. The senior men's race was won by Gary Staines of Belgrave. Belgrave won the team event by just four points from Box Hill Racers, with Thames Hare & Hounds third and South London Harriers fourth. Croydon Harriers placed sixth, while Striders were thirteenth. Striders' first man home was Eric Parker, in his first year with the club, who ran very well to finish 47th. Gerry Crispie was 90th, with Nigel Davidson 95th, John McGilvray 133rd, Colin Golding 176th and Stuart Millington completing the scoring team in 203rd.

The women's race was won by Zara Hyde of Woking. Striders had three runners: Elene Kayum was 45th, Barbara Cole 51st and Wendy Smith 88th. Future Strider Sarah Hansbury ran for Croydon Harriers in the under-15 girls' race and was the club's first finisher, placing 33rd.

20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 2006

The annual Surrey Road Relays took place at Wimbledon Park on 9 September. Striders' senior men finished in 13th place. The team comprised Matt Morgan (16:39), Justin Macenhill (15:32), John Foster (17:21), Darren Piper (17:27), Dominic Hawkins (18:24) and Scott Antony (16:47). Striders' M40 team placed 10th, with their best performance coming from David Batten who ran the final leg in 17:18. Their other runners were Chris Morton (18:12), Alan Dolton (19:29) and Dave Denton (22:19).

Striders held the fifteenth annual 'Switchback' five-mile race on 23 September. In unusually hot conditions, the winner was Mike Cummings of Herne Hill, who covered the five-mile course in 28:18. The first M40 to finish was former Croydon Harrier (and future Strider) Graham Hansen, still running well twenty years after he won the first Croydon 10K. He placed fifth overall (30:32). Striders won the team event, led home by Bob Ewen, who was the first M50 runner to finish, placing seventh overall (31:44). Club secretary Chris Morton was 11th (33:34) with Dominic Hawkins close behind in 13th (33:46). The first female finisher was Viv Mitchell of South London Harriers, who ran 35:01. Yvonne Hill of Ranelagh was second (36:55).

On 1 October, Striders produced an excellent performance to win the team event at Hercules Wimbledon's annual ten-mile road race. Striders were led home by Darren Piper who placed 18th (65:14). Club secretary Chris Morton was only thirteen seconds behind him in 20th place, while David Batten also ran well to place 26th (67:57).

The Surrey Cross-Country League began its 45th season on 14 October. Striders' men produced some good performances to place fourth in the opening Division Two match at Richmond Park. Striders were led home by Justin Macenhill, who ran well to place eighth of the 129 finishers, covering the five-mile course in 29:30. Scott Antony also ran well to finish 23rd (31:04), with Damian Macenhill 30th (31:56). Bob Ewen had an excellent run to place 42nd overall and second in the M50 category (32:36). Darren Piper was close behind in 43rd (32:40) with Tony Sheppard 47th (32:52), Matt Morgan 49th (33:05), John Foster 53rd (33:20), Nigel Davidson 61st (33:35) and Chris Morton 76th (34:37).

Meanwhile Striders' women placed fifth in their Division Two match at Epsom Downs, with a new team manager, John Ralf. Faye Stammers led the team home, finishing 14th in 23:44, just one place and six seconds ahead of Steph Upton. Kerry Backshell was 25th (24:41), with Steph Gilmour 40th (26:02), Linda Daniel 46th (26:24) and Amalia Da Silva Lima 53rd (26:54).

The 31st Croydon 10K took place on 22 October. Unusually, it started in Mapledale Avenue rather than Lloyd Park Avenue (it reverted to Lloyd Park Avenue two years later), and the course was slightly less than the advertised distance. The winner was John Kimaiyo of Belgrave, who ran 32:18. Jonathan McCallum of Croydon Harriers was second (33:35). Natalie Harvey of South London Harriers had an excellent run to place third overall in 33:43, this being the highest placing ever achieved by a woman in this race. The first Strider was Justin Macenhill who placed sixth (34:01).

The East Surrey League's annual cross-country race took place in Lloyd Park on 28 October. Hercules-Wimbledon won the match with 45 points, ahead of Epsom (48), Striders (55) and Croydon Harriers (71). Justin Macenhill produced another good run to place sixth, covering the undulating five-mile course in 30:39. Matt Morgan placed 14th (32:53) with Damian Macenhill 15th (33:10) and Paul Finch 20th (33:40). Bob Ewen was third in the M50 age-group (33:48) while Barry Finch was second in the M55 age-group (38:38). Kerry Backshell was the fourth woman to finish, placing 67th overall (40:08).

The second round of the Surrey Cross-Country League races took place on 11 November. Striders' men did well to finish third in their Division Two match at Wimbledon Common. Justin Macenhill ran very well to finish ninth. Matt Morgan finished 22nd, while new member Dave Archer placed 26th. Duncan Lancashire made a welcome return after a long absence through injury and placed 30th. Scott Antony was 35th, Damian Macenhill 56th, Paul Finch 62nd, Nigel Davidson 63rd, Bob Ewen 68th and Darren Piper 69th.

On the same day, Striders' women did very well to place third in their Division Two match at Lightwater. They were led home by Steph Upton, who placed 15th of the 97 finishers, covering the four-mile course in 28:37. She was closely followed by Faye Stammers who placed 18th (28:45). Kerry Backshell was 28th (29:25) with Amalia Da Silva Lima 49th (32:42) and Linda Daniel 55th (33:03).

10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN AUTUMN 2016

The Surrey Road Relays took place at Wimbledon on 3 September. Striders' senior men made a good start when James Bennett finished fifth on the opening leg, which he ran in 15:02. Peter Mills held this position on the second leg, which he ran in 15:39. He was followed by Mick Turner (18:56), Darren Woods (19:25), Barry White (18:46) and Simon Pannell (18:51). The team finished 15th.

On 25 September, Striders promoted the 25th annual Switchback race. The winner was Ollie Garrod of Epsom, who recorded 27:49. For Striders, Phil Coales ran very well to place second (28:17). Peter Mills was fourth (28:51), Bill Makuwa fifth (29:01), Lee Flanagan eighth (30:33) and Krzysztof Klidzia ninth (30:33). Striders comfortably won the team event. The first woman to finish was Deirdre McDermot of Ireland, who ran very well to place 11th overall (31:34). Striders' women were led by Selena Wong who was the tenth woman to finish (40:18). Yasmin Anderson was eleventh (40:39), Ally Whitlock 13th (41:34) and Karen Peake 17th (45:15).

Striders produced a good team performance to finish second in the East Surrey League's annual cross-country race at Lloyd Park on 1 October, only beaten by Herne Hill. Striders were led by Phil Coales who finished fourth, covering the five-mile course in 28:07. Bill Makuwa also ran well to place fifth (28:27), with Steve Starvis eighth (29:58) and new member Robert Lines completing the A team in 12th place (30:24). Lee Flanagan was 14th (30:54), Andy Perks 19th (31:56), Matthew Stone 20th (32:00) and Simon Pannell 25th (33:04). Striders' women were led by Debra Bourne who was 72nd overall (38:54). Joanne Campbell was 78th (40:48) and Laura Hartney 93rd (51:06).

On 9 October, James Bennett had an excellent run to finish seventh in the Cardiff Half-Marathon, in a new club record of 71:35. On the same day, Phil Coales placed third in the Croydon 10K (34:27) with Simone Luciani fourth (34:50).

Striders produced an excellent team performance to gain a convincing win in their first Surrey League Division Three match of the season, at Wimbledon Common on 15 October. James Bennett ran very well to place second, covering the six-mile course in 36:08. Phil Coales was fourth (36:50) with Peter Mills fifth (37:04), Simone Luciani sixth (37:07) and Bill Makuwa seventh (37:18). Team manager Krzysztof Klidzia was first in the M50 age-group, placing 15th overall (38:11). Lee Flanagan was 17th (38:38) with Robert Lines 19th (39:12), Steve Starvis 22nd (39:24) and Simon Ambrosi completing the scoring team in 34th (40:35). Striders also had 15 non-scorers. They won the team event with 131 points, well clear of second-placed Fulham who scored 289.

Meanwhile Striders' women were competing in their Division Two match at Nonsuch Park. Their A team placed 16th. Katie Chadd was 33rd (27:53), Charlotte Letchford 73rd (30:12), Yasmin Anderson 77th (30:20), Selena Wong 93rd (31:50) and Linda Daniel 123rd (32:47).

At Epsom Downs on 12 November, Striders' men produced an excellent team performance to win their second successive Surrey Cross-Country League Division Three match, extending their lead at the top of the Division Three table. Striders had the first three finishers with James Bennett winning the race, completing the five-mile course in 27:26. Peter Mills also ran well to place second (27:43) with Simone Luciani third (28:31). Steve Starvis placed ninth (29:34), one place ahead of Krzysztof Klidzia who recorded the same time and placed first in the M50 age-group. Phil Coales was 16th (29:50) with Robert Lines 18th (30:03), Lee Flanagan 22nd (30:24), Simon Ambrosi 27th (30:40) and Matthew Stone completing the scoring team in 52nd (32:15). Striders' women did not have a league match in November: their second match was deferred until December.

In the London Cross-Country Championships, at Parliament Hill Fields on 19 November, Striders' women did well to finish 19th. They were led by Steph Upton who finished 129th, covering the six-kilometre course in 28:03. Charlotte Letchford was 140th (28:25) with Joanne Campbell 157th (29:02) and Selena Wong 170th (29:38).

Striders' men placed 26th. They were led by Krzysztof Klidzia who was 94th, covering the ten-kilometre course in 37:06. Simon Pannell was 243rd (40:54), Andy Perks 247th (41:10) and Darren Jackson completed the scoring team in 279th (42:11). Striders also had six non-scorers.



James Bennett taking second place in our Surrey League race at Wimbledon in October 2016



Striders' victorious men's team after their Surrey League match at Epsom in November 2016

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