

# Striders of Croydon

JUNE 2016 MAGAZINE



**Peter Mills on his way to second place in the Croydon Half-Marathon (photo by Kevin Hann)**

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

Mon 13 June – Southern Veterans League – Wimbledon  
Sun 19 June – Ranelagh 10km (Surrey Championship) – Ham  
Sun 10 July – Race For Life – Lloyd Park (Striders marshalling)  
Mon 11 July – Southern Veterans League – Croydon Arena (Striders co-hosting)  
Sat 16 July – Elmore 7 miles (Surrey Road League) – Chipstead  
Sun 24 July – Elmbridge 10km (Surrey Road League)  
Sun 14 Aug – Wimbledon 5km (Surrey Championship)  
Sun 28 Aug – Southern Counties Veterans Championships – Kingsmeadow  
Sat 3 Sep – Surrey Road Relays – Wimbledon Park  
Sun 18 Sep – British Masters 5000m Championship – Birmingham  
Sun 25 Sep – Switchback 5 – Lloyd Park/Addington Hills (Striders marshalling)  
Sat 1 Oct – East Surrey League Cross-Country – Lloyd Park  
Sun 9 Oct – Croydon 10K – Lloyd Park Avenue  
Sat 15 Oct – Surrey Womens Cross-Country League Div 2 – venue tbc  
Sat 15 Oct – Surrey Cross-Country League Div 3 – Wimbledon  
Sat 22 Oct – Surrey Masters Cross-Country Championships – Richmond Park



**We are co-hosting the Veterans League match at Croydon Arena on 13 July**

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER JUNE 2016

As always, well done to everyone who completed a Marathon in the last few months whatever your pace.

Karim has given you a comprehensive description of what can be involved in building up to your first one. I confess that when I first decided to have a go way back in 2001 and unfortunately got my place through the club draw, so couldn't back out, I didn't take it too seriously: we did a few longer Sunday morning runs from the club house, I did a couple of runs back from stations on my own to force me to do the distance. On the day I survived to about 20 miles okay then struggled for the rest. My most vivid memory of the occasion was being overtaken by a tea pot on the Mall and not being able to do anything about it. I think I finished in about 4:35. Two years later I thought, "Oh I have done one now the next one will be easy", so really struggled and took over 5 hours. Finally in 2006 I took it much more seriously: we already had many more longer Sunday runs scheduled, I tried hard at the Tuesday night speed training and felt really good. On the day, at the very last minute I decided I better go to the loo and was sitting there when the start gun went off. When I came out I had to start nearly at the back, which was brilliant: I spent the whole race passing people, which was very good for morale; I felt really comfortable and finished in about 3:50. I have been going downhill ever since 😊.

However, next year I will be joining you on more of the runs and doing much less by bike, in an attempt to claim all the M70 distance records before one of our other sexagenarians catches up with me. Unfortunately my birthday isn't until May, after both London and Brighton, so I will have to find a marathon a bit later in the year. Clearly stupid to advertise this ambition now but I thought if I did it would make it much harder to chicken out nearer the time.

Meanwhile back to the recent past .... Alan has summarised all your achievements in the last few months. A special mention to Peter Mills and Rachel Lindley, who are certainly our fastest man and women at the moment.

The Croydon half went well and was much easier to manage with the help of Nice Works, though numbers were rather down and with no sponsorship from Streets Ahead this year we didn't have a huge surplus as in previous years. We have yet to confirm the final figures but I expect we will make a contribution of about £1000 to local charities, plus a contribution to improving our club house.

Our next significant event needing lots of helpers is the Race for Life in Lloyd Park on Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup>. For those new to the club, we do the course set up and provide most of the marshals for this event, so when we advertise for helpers in a week or two please be generous with your time. It is in a good cause.

May all your runs be through sunlit forests.

*Robin Jamieson*

Chairman, Striders of Croydon

## STRIDER PROFILE: PETER MILLS

**Name:** Peter Mills

**Current age-group:** Senior Men

**Home Town:** I come from the outskirts of Banstead, near Nork Park

**When did you move to Croydon:** July 2014

**When did you begin running:** At school – I used to run cross country for Sutton Grammar and occasionally for the London Borough of Sutton

**When did you join Striders:** I joined second claim in autumn 2014, and I upgraded to first claim in May 2015

**Have you been a member of any other running clubs:** Yes, in fact I am a member of a few running clubs:

- Tadworth AC – I was first claim there from November 2010 to May 2015, and I am now second claim. I still do long runs with them on Sunday mornings and run in a few of their social races, like their summer handicap series.
- Croydon Harriers – I have recently joined second claim in order to race on the track this summer.
- My employer's running club (they shall remain nameless!) – They want me to pay £14 to buy a running vest heavily branded with the firm's logo. Typical accountancy firm!
- South London Orienteers – not strictly a running club, but I thought I would mention them here. I am an on/off member and occasionally run map-in-hand.

That's quite a long list of running clubs, how sad!

**Have you competed in any other sports:** At school I played football, but not to any great standard. I just ran up and down the wing and made myself look busy. I rowed for the University of Bristol, winning a bronze in the British University Fresher's Eights. I gave up shortly after I was asked to be the substitute cox. I needed to put on about 3 stone and grow a couple of inches to have any chance of doing well in that sport. Orienteering – I thoroughly recommend this sport to everyone at Striders, in particular those with declining pace. There will be an orienteering race in Lloyd Park on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Google "DFOK GLOSS Lloyd Park" nearer the time for more info.

**What was your best ever race:** Until this year it was the 2012 Nationals at Parliament Hill, where I finished 201<sup>st</sup>, but clearly this year's 153<sup>rd</sup> trumps that. What felt like my best ever performance was this year's league fixture at Lloyd Park, which was my first ever win of a meaningful race. Running for Surrey in the Inter-Counties has been my best achievement, but looking back I think I could have attacked that race a bit earlier on.

The best races I have done as a team were both for Tadworth – winning the Richmond Half in 2012 by beating Clapham Chasers (we came 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> versus their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> – it felt like Kenya v Ethiopia!). Even better was getting promoted to Surrey XC Division 2 by holding off Croydon Harriers – a really big achievement for a small club.

**What is your favourite event:** Cross Country. Probably 5 miles is my best distance. The muddier the better. My favourite local event is the Pirie 10. Parliament Hill and the Box Hill Fell Race are also favourites of mine.

**What is the most memorable place you have run:** Can I put down two?

The LAMM in the Scottish Highlands (a two day mountain orienteering event, carrying tent and supplies) - hard work, beautiful scenery, huge risk of getting lost, huddling with your team mate on top of a non-descript fell whilst watching the clouds descend upon you.

Man v Horse – a 22-mile fell race in the Brecon Beacons against horses (with riders). I was severely under prepared for this last year, and had to take a lie down at 16 miles to try to get some blood in my head before I dropped. I was about to start munching on some grass when a fellow runner gave me his energy bar – my saviour. If you like cross country then you will love this race – but do a lot of mileage preparation in advance. And take some sort of energy supply with you.

**What are your current running goals:**

Get Striders back up to Surrey XC Division 2

Beat James' half marathon club record before he beats my 10 mile club record

Get the 10k club record (Elmbridge 10k anyone?)

Win a team event with Striders (e.g. a local road league event – we definitely could – Elmbridge 10k anyone?!?)

Get in the top 500 on the runbritain rankings

Not to embarrass myself on the track

Win the Pirie 10

Get picked for the Surrey Inter-Counties again



**The Surrey team (with Peter on the right) at the Inter-Counties Championships**

## 100 MARATHONS (by Lisa Jackson)

I didn't get a telegram from the Queen when I did my 100<sup>th</sup> marathon, but that didn't mean the occasion was any less celebrated. And many of the Striders who've accompanied me on my exciting journey were there to share in my special day. I used to be the kind of woman who drove to the corner shop and paid for parking in Lower Addiscombe Road rather than walk the three minutes it took to get there so I don't think anyone was more surprised than I was when I finally reached this momentous milestone. My first marathon was way back in 1999 and since then I've walk/run 26.2 miles in cities as diverse as Istanbul, Athens, Hong Kong, New York and Boston. Of course I said 'Never again' after my first one in London, and then I said 'Perhaps one more'. And then it was 'I'll only do five' – and before I knew it I was hooked.

Ever since Victoria Legge gently urged me to put on a high-vis vest when I turned up to the club dressed in head-to-toe black one dark winter's evening, Striders's members have always played a big role in keeping me motivated. Even though I'm the slowest member in the club they've always turned back for me on training runs, cheered me on at speed sessions and made appreciative noises whenever I popped up at the post-London Marathon party, my medals clanking away like a female version of the A Team's Mr T. (Being as slow as I am, I knew that if I couldn't compete with the hares on quality, I'd have to go for quantity instead.) The biggest boost I got from Striders was when I decided to do the 56-mile Comrades Marathon in South Africa in 2009. In a flash I went from being a ghost member to turning up at speed sessions (again thanks to Victoria assuring me they weren't only for the fleetest of foot) and long Sunday runs. With the help of Robin, Chris and Alan (and Victoria for company) I achieved a dream I almost didn't dare dream. Twice!

### The Big Day

Getting to 100 marathons involved a lot more than putting one foot in front of the other for well over 2,620 miles (I threw in three ultras for good measure). As if that wasn't challenging enough I had to arrange race places, hotels, flights (and often extended cut-offs or early starts) to reach my goal. I also had the added pressure of launching my new running book, *Your Pace or Mine?*, on the same day as my 100th so I couldn't afford to miss my target. Fortunately, I managed to stay relatively injury free and didn't need to convert the two half marathons I'd booked as 'spares' into full marathons at the last minute.



Lisa's friend Danielle Cemprola gives pacing instructions

Finally, the day of my 100th dawned and we set off for Fowlmead Country Park near Deal, the site of a former coal mine, for our 'celebration on a slagheap' as my husband cheekily put it. Friends had come from far and wide to run/walk with me: from Prague, South Carolina, Milan, Preston, Carlisle – and Croydon. I'd spent the preceding weeks frantically buying my preferred race snacks. Traviss Willcox, the chairman of the 100 Marathon Club, also happened to be the race director of the Fowlmead Challenge. He doesn't really approve of gloopy gels and syrupy sports drinks so instead lays on snacks that would be more fitting at a children's birthday party such as cheese straws, crisps and brownies. I decided to add to the party provisions with a few favourites of my own: Mini Cheddars, Wotsits, Liquorice Allsorts, shortbread, Coke and Ribena (and a few cases of South African wine for afters).

### ***This is Your Life***

The event involved doing 13 laps of a two-mile course and the day itself was a bit like an episode of *This is Your Life* as people I'd run with over the past 18 years braved the chill to come and wish me well. I even received a big book from one friend where guests could write good luck messages – it wasn't red, but it most certainly will be read. One of my earliest companions was fellow Strider Nick Kyritsis, who'd been an inspiration to me for several years as he'd joined the 100 Marathon Club back in the day. As he's now gunning for his 300th marathon we'd encountered each other at many of the local marathons I'd entered (last year I did 25 and Nick was at almost all of them!) Although Nick is most definitely *not* my pace, he always slowed down to give me a pat on the back and exchange a few words of chat before shooting off to catch up with his 100 Marathon Club pals, and after every race where I'd seen him I could expect to be sent an email asking me how I'd done and encouraging me to keep going. Nick, true to form, completed a marathon distance in the time it took me to do about 13 miles, so after a huge hug, he headed home, and I had the chance to chat to other friends, several of whom had chosen to do their first marathon at my event, lured by the coaster-sized pink medal (specially matched via a Pantone reference to the pink flamingo hat I often wear). I think they also liked the idea of dressing up in pink – I'd decided to call the event the Fabulous Flamingo Extravaganza and even my husband Graham (a ghost member of Striders if ever there was one) was persuaded to don a pink tutu and a feather boa tail!

### **Tears and cheers**

Even though I took well over nine hours to finish the pancake flat course (an even slower performance than I'd achieved in the horrendously hilly Beachy Head, which I've done with many of you many times), the day passed in the blink of an eye, and all of a sudden I found myself running into the arms of my ever-supportive husband, sobbing uncontrollably. I'd done it! A journey that started way back in 1999 had ended. Boy it felt good! Once the tears had been wiped away I peeled myself off Graham and looked around me – I was surrounded by well-wishers including Striders such as Corinne Carr, Julie Jordan, Sarah Sutherland and Tony Flowers (who told me he was on a secret squirrel recce – watch this space, I'm sure he'll be entering crisp-and-candy fuelled marathons shortly). Even though it was by now cold enough to turn everyone's lips blue, they'd stuck around to cheer me in. And then it was time for the presentation of my spanking new 100 Marathon T-shirt and medal – and a few glugs of South African wine, before I commenced an impromptu alfresco book signing of *Your Pace or Mine?*, which features not only my own story but that of the extraordinary Striders (yes, and other runners) I'd met along the way. John O'Dowd and his unfortunate application of Vaseline, Taylor Huggins and his gnarly feet, Ozgur Gulec and his transformation from obese smoker to ultrarunner, Victoria Legge and her dogged determination and Tony Flowers and his upgrade from back of the pack to run leader. A more entertaining cast of characters would be hard to find. And then it was all over. Time to dash back to Croydon, grab some sleep, and show off my new T-shirt the very next day at the Brighton Marathon!



**Lisa pictured with Striders' most prolific marathon runner, Nick Kyritsis**



**Lisa pictured with fellow-Striders Tony Flowers and Julie Jordan**

Lisa Jackson is the author of [Your Pace or Mine? What Running Taught Me About Life, Laughter and Coming Last](#) (£6.99 paperback and £4.29 on Kindle via Amazon).



## **MY FIRST TIME: BRIGHTON MARATHON 2016 (Excerpts From The Diary Of A Secret Marathon Trainee by Karim Akhtar)**

I never wanted to be a marathon runner but that all went wrong when I joined Striders.

### **January - April 2015: I'll never do a marathon**

My first ever Sunday run with Striders was the annual trip along the Thames, London Bridge to Greenwich and back, half-marathon distance which I had done a few times. I joined those training for marathons that year, including Selena who said a lot of Striders seem to do a marathon a year after joining the club. Not me, no interest in running much more than a couple of hours, no marathon interest at all, half marathon was plenty. The run was in good weather, great company, with Stuart Hills expertly leading as ever, one really enjoyable morning. A month later I ran my second Sunday run, Warlingham to Sparrows Den. Another enjoyable run mainly on quiet country roads and by the end I had run 27.7km (17.26 miles), tired but felt great, more than great, such a buzz and couldn't believe I'd just run that distance. Eight days later I was awoken by severe pain in my right calf, hopped around and used some interesting language: cramp. I paid the price for increasing the distance too quickly and never stretching: I was unable to run for three weeks. It's amazing what severe pain will encourage you to do and I quickly learned about stretching.

### **Sunday, April 12th 2015**

At work all day, apps installed to monitor the progress of Striders running the Brighton and Paris marathons. Quite exciting to think that people I run with were doing this epic distance. I checked the splits every 25-30mins and it was great tracking the progress of people I knew. My interest in marathons had gone from absolute zero to 100% in just a few months thanks to my new marathon-running friends. Two days later I received my confirmation for the Brighton Marathon 2016 and somehow forgot to mention it to anyone. I was both excited and wondering what on Earth I was doing.

### **April - September 2015: So I'm doing a marathon**

I had a year to prepare, no problem. I read so many plans: four runs a week, five runs a week, tempo, easy, speed, hill. How do people fit this all in? As a shift worker I would be lucky to get three runs in a week. All the plans said the distance run was the most important, building up to a maximum of between 16 and 22 miles. Most did not recommend doing the full marathon distance but I felt if I could do the distance in training then I would get a huge confidence boost. I set myself a target of reaching this magic distance by the end of the year. I think part of the reason I forgot to tell anyone about my marathon was I just didn't know if I could do it. I also thought it would be quite funny to just turn up on the day and surprise a few people.

The Wednesday and Sunday runs moved off road and my running got worse and worse. I went from the front of group 3 to barely keeping up at the back. I also was getting pains in my right shin during some runs, at the same point around 2-3 km. I enlisted the expertise of the highly recommended Alan Dolton and my shin bothered me much less with my first experiences of sports massage, ouch! By the middle of July my running was still going backwards and I probably should have tried running backwards as it couldn't get much worse. A few of us ran the Brighton Phoenix 10k with the sea breeze to cool the otherwise humid weather. I came away with a PB and realised that (a) I can't run in the heat; and (b) I am definitely a road runner. I made no progress at all over the summer. Perhaps it was just as well I hadn't told anyone what I was doing, but cooler weather was coming and a move back to on road.

## September - December 2015: training restarted

To kick-start my training I signed up for the Maidenhead and Reigate half marathons and the Kingston 10 miles, a race every two weeks almost completely sabotaged by my over-doing it before the first race. Left IT band and right calf pain after a week of doing too much. Some trips to Alan rescued all three races and I managed a PB in Maidenhead despite not being full recovered. Two solo half marathons in four days at the end of October and I was finally putting together a sequence of long distance runs around my shifts.

The Striders' fortnightly marathon training runs were coming and I work every other weekend. Luckily, Robin (our very own Banksy) started these runs on my weekend off. Beckenham 12, Coulsdon 11, as well as the muddy, rainy, tow path of the Thames Meander half marathon between them. December I managed a 26.5 km solo run and after the 9 Parks training run I continued on to get to 30 km, my furthest ever. No marathon distance for me by the end of the year as planned, but progress.

## January - April 2016

London Bridge to Greenwich again one year on and I'm actually training for a marathon. How things change. A year ago I would have bet my house on me not having any interest in marathon running. I still 'forgot to' mention this to anyone and the usual questions came during the training runs: "Which marathon are you doing?", with my typical reply: "Oh I'm just trying to do the distance" – which of course was true. As I saw Alan regularly after the long runs I eventually let him in on my secret. A solo run of 35 km, furthest so far and very pleased indeed. The month finished off with the Riddlesdown 14 and the 9 Parks 16, with a lovely view near the transmitter masts of Crystal Palace if you are still actually breathing when you get to the top of that hill. I didn't run all the Striders' marathon training runs but they became the basis for my training. If I couldn't do the run I would do a distance run the day before or after. If I didn't like the route I would do a distance run by myself at the same time. I was also learning to drink and eat on a run. When I had previously taken on water during a race I just seemed to burp for the next 20 minutes.

The Merstham 15 at the start of February seemed too off-road for me so I went solo, with the intention of extending my furthest distance. I reached Bromley Common on my regular route but sharp pains made me stop at half-marathon distance and retire to a bus home that luckily picked up outside Greggs who sell medicinal hot sausage rolls. I managed the Wednesday double run without any problem, but on Thursday evening a post on social media set me up for my run the next day. Nicole Woods, with a very impressive training programme for the Boston marathon, posted her total for that week from her running app: 47 miles. I had done 26 miles and that was a good week for me but way behind. We seemed to run one day apart for many of our distance runs and Nicole became like a virtual training partner for me - although I was nowhere near her great pace. My Friday plan was to be a minimum of half marathon, trying to keep at 6 mins/km pace and see how it goes. I got there with some tightness in my right quads but continued to the next target of 25 km. Still going, so set the next target of matching my 2<sup>nd</sup> furthest distance of 30 km. All going well, so went to match my furthest distance of 35 km. As I was still breathing I thought maybe I'll just go to 37.2 km, only 5 km short of the magic distance. Of course if I'm going to 37.2 km then I might as go to 40 km, and if I'm going to 40 km it would be silly not to do 42.2 km. Finally, marathon distance! I couldn't stop smiling and was probably unbearably happy on my nightshift that night. So I discovered that I am capable of running a marathon.

My training had been mainly long-distance running with very little of all the other runs you're supposed to do. Now I had reached my target, confidence boosted, I planned to spend six weeks working on my pace. After a couple of weeks rest from distance running I joined the London Bridge to Sandilands via Greenwich run. My shin pain returned: always at the same distance when it happens. I managed to run on and things improved but I didn't do another long run for three weeks while under the care of Alan the life-saver again. So much for those other runs. At least the Wednesday runs had elements of speed and hill. As I recovered I

found myself stretching at every opportunity, at work pushing against cupboards, calf raises on escalators, quad stretches at the back of office meetings, foam rolling at home. My work days became my rest days from running.

Just before my next long run I went to Brighton and ran 12 km from the pier to Ovingdean and back, the hill section of the marathon course, wondering if anyone would wonder why I am running part of the marathon course. Three days later my long run was a real eye-opener: 30 km 14 minutes quicker than my previous attempt thanks to my injury-caused taper. Wow, tapering really does make a difference.

### **The final 3 weeks: colds, injuries, time to pull out**

My final long run, three weeks before the event, was 32.20 km at an easy pace, with a double Wednesday run then a half-marathon run with two weeks to go.

As the marathon came closer everyone was sniffing with colds. I used hand gel and Vicks First Defence but of course I got the cold. Vitamin C and zinc helped and the cold didn't come on fully, but I felt the tiredness. With six days to go I did a 5 km run with my shin pain returning slightly, then went home and slept for six hours feeling exhausted. Some iron helped combat the post-cold tiredness. The final Wednesday run with Striders and the shin pain caused me to stop. Disaster. Exhaustion two days earlier and shin pain that took weeks to fix before: I was ready to pull out of the marathon. The shin pain pointed to exertional compartment syndrome. The next day I didn't eat, fed-up, but used ice packs every two hours, stretches, foam rolling, calf raises and ibuprofen gel. After consultation with Alan I went for a run in the evening and took it easy until my shin warmed up. I got past the usual pain point freely and reached 5 km, walked for a bit, then a 4 km run home. Saved. A complete turnaround. The joys of running! Twenty-four hours of distress actually helped me as now I was just glad to be getting to the start line. I knew there was a chance I would have to stop if the shin pain or post-cold tiredness hit but accepted this. I could just relax and see what happened on the day.

### **Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April: Marathon day, the big reveal**

I stayed in a hotel in Hove, booked 11 months earlier, and on way to the supermarket to get breakfast I posted a photo of an empty Hove sea front. I had said to other Striders I would try and get down to support them but being up at 6.30am and already in the area might be a pretty big hint...

A 3 km walk to Preston Park, lots of people heading the same way, chatted to a couple doing their first marathon too. It was one of those special occasions where everyone is excited and talking to everyone else. Preston Park was just full of queues for too few toilets. Thank goodness for the male standing-room-only area that had no queues.

I spotted a yellow Striders top, Richard Tanner. I approached, hoodie up and after a year of keeping quiet did the big reveal. Not surprised to see me at all! Same again when Mrs T joined us. Oh well! Off to the start line in the mud with Team Tanner, Darren Woods, Terence Buxton and Michael Hinchliffe. After 25 mins we were off. Just a Striders' Sunday run really.

First task was to get beyond 3 km without any shin pain. Around the park and towards Brighton, then inland before heading back towards the pier and up the hill. Worked perfectly. The easy start allowed my shin to warm up nicely and I went beyond 3 km very happy. Richard and I ran the first 10 km together, with the occasional encouraging words between us. It was just nice to run alongside someone who is good company and you regularly run with; couldn't have imagined a nicer first 10 km, with Lynn Hann and Steve Massey shouting out support to us from the crowd as well.

Up the hill to Ovingdean, a section I had run a few weeks before. My pace was good, overtaking people easily and I think this was my fastest section, which surprised me. As I went up, other Striders came down the other side of the road and it made for a good distraction to watch for the yellow vest and shout out support to a few surprised people.

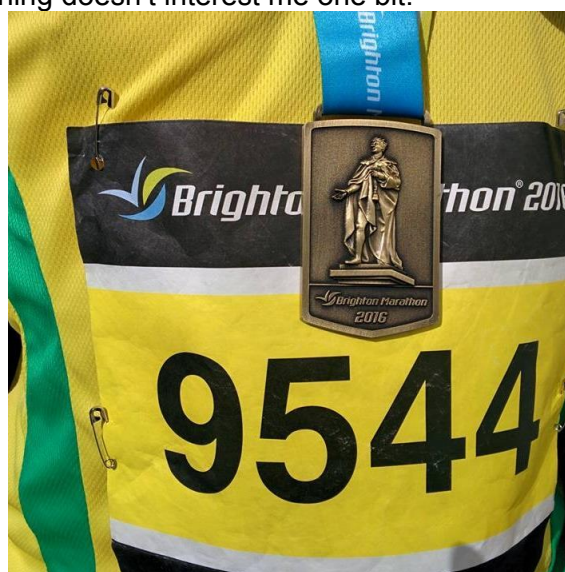
Down the hill and beyond the pier to half distance. My 'jelly beans every 4 km' strategy was going well, just before each water stop so I could wash them down. Small amounts often. Drinking from paper cups was difficult though and drinking through your nose because of this isn't the best, but I found a method after the first few attempts.

Through to Hove and the long Church Road section and back. A few more bands here and they were very welcome as the down section of the road had bright sunshine and I was starting to feel it. On the return section the buildings blocked out the sun and my pace came back a little, such a relief to be out of that sun and plenty of water consumed here too. Tony Flowers was along this stretch of road so we got a shout out of support both ways and again on the sea front, dedication! It was along this section that I saw several people, probably half my age, horizontal on the side of the road, wrapped in foil and being attended to by ambulance staff. At one point there was an emergency ambulance heading down too. That really hit home what we were doing and hopefully going to achieve. Not easy.

Back to the seafront and towards "The Road to Hell". The road to the power station just went on and on and on. No distractions, no music that I can remember, barely enough strength to look for other Striders and give a shout out. The wall closed in but I'd been here before. I was fed-up of eating jelly beans by now and switched to jelly babies. I'm not sure if any of it had helped. I started to set small targets as I had when I reached the distance a few weeks before. Next target the power station, then back through the industrial area to another target of the seafront. More bodies, I mean runners, at the side of the road.

I looked forward to seeing the pier in the distance once I reached the seafront but I couldn't see it, just how far was it?! Eventually the marshals shouted out this was the last water station – and I needed it. Luckily they were wrong as a charity had another water station further down the road, also much needed. I set targets of reaching each next km, small steps to keep me going, but I think time had slowed down as I was sure I was still running but going nowhere. Eventually the pier came in view, with the finish line not far beyond. I think by then if I could have just pushed a button and been transported to a nice soak in the bath I would have pushed it, as part of me was beyond caring, just tired. The crowds were great all along the course but by the last couple of miles the noise was overwhelming and I just wanted to cross the finish line. Some of my final steps later appeared on Channel 4 with some very appropriate commentary, fame at last! The section from the pier to the finish line seemed much longer than I had expected but time eventually returned to normal and I was the happiest person alive going across that line, the famous words of Steve Redgrave looming large in my mind. Done it, exhausted, exhilarated.

Over the next few days, random smiles appeared on my face with the occasional laugh: to think that I'm a marathon runner! I can't confirm it but it is quite possible my computer accessed the London Marathon and Manchester Marathon entries pages for 2017 recently. But of course marathon running doesn't interest me one bit.



## A DANISH PARKRUN (by Selena Wong)

Over the Easter weekend I had the opportunity to try out a parkrun in the beautiful city of Copenhagen. parkrun spread to Denmark in 2009 and the country now has six events. Having kindly offered to accommodate us at his home, my half-Danish cousin was persuaded to join me as a first-timer at the event in Fælledparken, just north of the city centre.

We were blessed with sunny weather and it was quite easy to work out the start position from the small crowd that had gathered near a podium, where a couple of runners were being presented with their 10 and 50 T-shirts. As we joined in the applause, my cousin translated the announcement, but I could pretty much guess what was being said, along with the usual request for more volunteers and for runners to respect the other park-users. There was a tarpaulin laid out for bags and belongings; the familiarity of it all was most comforting.

And then we set off. Fælledparken is a rectangularish expanse of green lawn set amongst city streets and buildings. I later discovered that these buildings were the Freemasons' Hall, Rigshospitalet hospital, Telia Parken football stadium (home of FC Copenhagen) and various university properties. We were a small crowd of 51 runners with only five volunteers, who were stationed at the start/finish and as we set off we soon spread out.

The route, marked out in flour arrows, took us around the perimeter of the park, passing a fountain, a pavilion, a skater park and children's playground. The tree-lined paths, a mixture of tarmac and gravel, were wide enough to allow sufficient space for cyclists, pedestrians and other runners. Many other runners. That was what puzzled me – why were there so many not joining in the event?

Being completely flat, this is a good course to set a fast time, but I must admit that by the third and final lap, when my trainers were still clean, I was missing the usual undulations and mud that I am usually privileged to as a Strider. After I came through the finish line, I was delighted to see that a miniature green van had appeared, complete with coffee-making facilities for the weary finishers in need of refreshment.

I asked a volunteer why the many other runners in the park didn't join in. He just shrugged. At that moment a group of rather fit-looking people ran by, to the shy applause and admiration of the parkrunners. 'Marathon runners,' my acquaintance explained and he just laughed at me when I asked why they weren't doing the parkrun too. My cousin supposes that it is the reticence of the Danish people that stops the parkrunners from making contact with strangers in the park in the hope that they might be interested.

In my opinion, I think they could do with a very large flag that has 'parkrun' on it, as all they had was a tiny banner and on the other side of it was an advert for the Copenhagen marathon which was more visibly displayed. It was a small and low-key event, but with all the spirit that I love so much about parkrun, not least the volunteers who gladly give up their time to arrange it and offer encouragement to the runners.

A few tips if you ever decide to go:

1. Fælledparken is pronounced 'Faydlpargen' – Danish spellings often bear little resemblance to their pronunciation.
2. Consider cycling when you're there – Copenhagen is perfect for cyclists with cycling paths everywhere.

3. Don't do what I did and sit on the end of the long benches where everyone leaves their clothes; they are not benches, they are actually see-saws!
4. If you happen to swear out loud, be warned that everyone understands and speaks very good English.
5. Copenhagen is a great place for a city break – both modern and historical, it offers many opportunities for treating yourself to delicious pastries, and of course when you're there Carlsberg is a must-have.



**Selena pictured in her Striders' vest after completing the Faelledparken parkrun**

## STRIDER PROFILE: SELENA WONG

**Name:** Selena Wong

**Current age-group:** 40-45

**Home Town:** I was born in Birmingham and lived there in Kings Heath until I was 18. I also lived in Sai Kung, a rural part of Hong Kong, from 1982-1989.

**When did you move to Croydon:** In 2005 I moved to Selsdon. Before that I was living in Beckenham and West Wickham, which were convenient for my work placements in Bromley and Farnborough hospital.

**When did you begin running:** I did my first parkrun at Lloyd park in August 2012, having been persuaded to give it a try by some friends at my yoga class. 5 km seemed like a long distance back then and it nearly killed me; I had a lot of trouble walking the next day. But I became quite hooked and have never looked back.

**When did you join Striders:** As my 5k runs improved, I decided to enter the Richmond 10k in 2013. Running my first race was an exhilarating experience and I decided that to improve myself, I would be best placed to join a club – hence I joined in October that year.

**Have you been a member of any other running clubs:** No

**Have you competed in any other sports:** Unfortunately not. I perceived that I had no natural ability with sport and didn't enjoy it, so I gave up trying. At the international school I attended in Hong Kong, there were many talented students and I was accustomed to being one of the slowest at running and swimming. Team sports were not great either as I would run away from the ball most of the time to avoid getting injured.

**What was your best ever race:** My best race was the Richmond Salomon City trail half marathon last year. The weather was perfect, it was a lovely route, everything seemed to go just right and I was pleased with my finish time.

**What is your favourite event:** parkrun has to be my favourite. I continue to go every Saturday where possible and would like to try as many different events both in and outside the UK as I can. I love that it is so inclusive and can be a way of getting into running for people who are not confident about their sporting ability, like me.

**What is the most memorable place you have run:** Probably when I did a solitary run alongside a fjord in Norway. The views were stunning, especially the remarkable bright blueness of the water, which had melted from the mountain glaciers. Another memorable run was my first marathon in London last year; the atmosphere was uplifting and it was incredible to be part of such a huge event.

**What are your current running goals:** I have learned that anyone can improve their running with the right practice and techniques. It is my ambition to run another marathon, perhaps Paris next year and to achieve a finish time a little closer to 4 hours. I would also like to keep pushing to improve my parkrun times and see what I can achieve in doing so.

## SURREY ROAD LEAGUE TABLES (as at 31 May)

### MEN

Ranelagh	63
Wimbledon Windmilers	63
Reigate	61
Clapham	56
South London	53
Woking	52
London City	49
<b>Striders of Croydon</b>	<b>47</b>
Tadworth	47
Guildford	43
Hercules-Wimbledon	42
Herne Hill	42
Stragglers	40
Epsom	40
Collingwood	38
Sutton	36
Croydon Harriers	35
Epsom Oddballs	31
Dorking	30
Thames H&H	29
Camberley	29
West Four	28
Lingfield	23
Barnes	21
Elmbridge	20
Walton	17
26.2RRC	12
Windle Valley	11
Redhill	8
Kingston	7



**Phil Coales leading our team home at the Sutton 10K road race**



## WOMEN

Woking 64  
Ranelagh 63  
Wimbledon Windmilers 58  
Clapham 57  
South London 57  
Collingwood 54  
London City 47  
Stragglers 46  
Tadworth 46  
Elmbridge 43  
**Striders of Croydon 40**  
Sutton 39  
Guildford 35  
Thames H&H 33  
Lingfield 32  
West Four 31  
Camberley 30  
Herne Hill 29  
Epsom Oddballs 27  
Croydon Harriers 25  
Epsom Allsorts 22  
Reigate 21  
Epsom & Ewell 19  
26.2 RRC 13  
Dorking 10



**Selena Wong leads Michelle Campbell in the Sutton 10K**

## SOUTHERN VETERANS LEAGUE TABLES (as at 31 May)

### MEN

Hercules-Wimbledon 15  
 Kingston & Polytechnic 14  
 Epsom & Ewell 13  
 Croydon Harriers 9.5  
**Striders of Croydon 8.5**  
 Walton 6  
 Dorking 4

### WOMEN

Epsom & Ewell 16  
 Kingston & Polytechnic 14  
 Hercules-Wimbledon 11.5  
 Croydon Harriers 10.5  
 Walton 8  
**Striders of Croydon 6**  
 Dorking 0

## VETERANS LEAGUE 2016 – PROVISIONAL TIMETABLES

### MATCH 3: MONDAY JUNE 13th 2015 WIMBLEDON PARK STADIUM, SW19 8AU

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			<b>MEN</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>
1830			DT(O/35,50,60)	SP (O/35,50&60)
1900	2000 WALK	M&WO/35,O/50	TJ(O/40,50,60)	HJ (O/35,50&60)
1925	800 Men	O/35,O/50,O/70		HT (O/35,50)
1930			HJ(O/35,50)	
1935	800 Women	A,B,O/50		
1945	200 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		TJ (O/35,50)
1955	200 Women	A,B,O/50,O/60		
2000			JT(O/40,50,70)	
2005	5000M Men	M O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60		
	& Women	W A,B,O/50		
2030	4x200m RELAY	Men		
2045	4x200m RELAY	Women		

### MATCH 4: MONDAY JULY 11th 2015 CROYDON ARENA (hosted by CROYDON HARRIERS & STRIDERS OF CROYDON)

	<u>TRACK</u>		<u>FIELD</u>	
			<b>MEN</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>
1830			JT (O/35,50,60)	DT(O/35,50,60)
1900	100 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50,O/60	HJ (O/40,50,60)	TJ (O/35,50,60)
1910	100 Women	A,B,O/50,O/60		
1920	2000 WALK	M&W O/35,O/50	SP (O/40,50)	
1940			LJ (O/35,O/50,O/70)	JT(O/35,O/50)
1950	400 Men	O/35,O/40,O/50		
2000	400 Women	A,B,O/50		HJ(O/35,50)
2010	1500 Men	O/35,O/50,O/70		
2025	1500 Women	A,B,O/50		
2035	4x100m Relay	Men		
2045	4x100m Relay	Women		

## COMPETITIVE HIGHLIGHTS: MARCH – MAY 2016

Peter Mills ran very well to finish 70th in the Inter-Counties Cross-Country Championship at Cofton Park, Birmingham, on 12 March. He was the fourth Surrey runner to finish, and was the first Strider to represent Surrey in this event since Jane Lansdown did so in 2000. At Exeter on 20 March, Krzysztof Klidzia set a club over-50 10 kilometre record of 36 minutes 36. On 26 March, Peter Mills had an outstanding run to place fourth in the Maidenhead 10-mile road race, setting a new club record of 54 minutes 17 seconds. On 3 April he placed 41st in the Reading Half Marathon, recording a new personal best of 72 minutes 10, lifting him to second place in Striders' all-time club rankings. On the same day Krzysztof Klidzia set a club over-50 record of 78 minutes 26 in the Paddock Wood Half Marathon.

Striders successfully promoted the sixth annual Croydon Half Marathon on Sunday 10 April. The race was won by Michael Eccles of Norfolk Gazelles in 74 minutes 15 seconds. Striders were led by Peter Mills who had another good run to finish second in 75 minutes 32. Club colleague Simon Ambrosi was 13th (85.24) with Phil Coales close behind in 14th (86.17), ensuring that Striders won the men's team prize. Striders also won the women's team event, led by Katie Chadd who was the fourth woman to finish, placing 76th overall in 1 hour 42 minutes 03 seconds. Laura Walters was 175th (2.03.21) and Jennifer Hart 194th (2.10.28).

Rachel Lindley had an excellent run in the Boston Marathon on Monday 18 April, recording a personal best of 3 hours 11 minutes 25 seconds, which lifted her to third place in Striders' all-time women's rankings. Simone Luciani finished in 2 hours 59 minutes 54 seconds.

Striders had an impressive total of 27 finishers in the London Marathon on Sunday 24 April. They were led by Tyler O'Callaghan who finished in a personal best 2 hours 44 minutes 50 seconds, lifting him to seventh place in Striders' all-time club rankings. Krzysztof Klidzia ran very well to finish 13th in the over-50 category, setting a new club age-group record of 2 hours 45 minutes 45 seconds. Both Lee Flanagan (2.46.25) and Matt Smith (2.55.51) set personal bests, while Bill Makuwa, running his second marathon in successive weeks, did well to record 2.57.42. Graeme Drysdale broke three hours for the first time (2.58.27).

Lee Flanagan ran very well to place 30th out of 762 finishers in the Ranelagh Richmond Half Marathon, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, on Sunday 1 May. He recorded 79 minutes 48 seconds. Club colleague Krzysztof Klidzia also ran well to place 33rd overall and fourth in the over-50 category, recording 80 minutes 50. Peter Laurence completed Striders' scoring trio in 184th (96.24). Claire Oyediran finished 569th (2.02.05). A week later Striders had 26 finishers in the Sutton 10 kilometre road race at Nonsuch Park. Philip Coales placed 14th (36.29) with Lee Flanagan 22nd (37.22) and Graeme Drysdale 65th (40.36). Striders' first woman was Selena Wong who placed 267th (52.21).

In the first Southern Veterans League match of the season, at Kingsmeadow on Monday 9 May, Paul Cripps won the M50 long jump (4.36) and placed third in the M50 100 metres in a new club age-group record of 13.8. David Batten won the M60 long jump (3.34), while Sam O'Dongo equalled the club M40 100 metre record of 12.8, placing fourth in a high-quality race and Lorraine Hunte set a club W60 100 metre record of 17.2 seconds, placing second in her race. In the second match, at Ewell two weeks later, Paul Cripps won the M50 triple jump with a club age-group record of 9.86 metres, having earlier placed second in the M50 200 metres with a club age-group record of 28.6 seconds. Julian Spencer-Wood won the M60 800 metres in a club M65 record of 2 minutes 41.5.

James Bennett produced an excellent run to place 13th in the Edinburgh Marathon on 29 May. His time of 2 hours 36 minutes 40 seconds broke his own club record for the distance.

## 20 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SPRING / SUMMER 1996

On 5 March, Striders' leading runner, Lee Morgan, set a personal best of 55 minutes 58 seconds in the Woking 10-mile road race, lifting him to third place in the club's all-time rankings. (Only two more Striders have subsequently beaten Lee's time, so he is now fifth.)

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

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

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

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

The Surrey Veterans Championships were held at Tooting on 1 June. John McGilvray gained a double victory in the over-50 800 metres (2.27.4) and 1500 metres (4.57.4). In the over-55 category, Kevin Burnett gained six medals, winning the shot (6.03) and javelin (21.68), and taking second place in the 100 metres (15.1), 200 metres (31.4), discus (21.07) and hammer (15.52).

The summer of 1996 saw the resolution of the long-running saga of the change of Striders' club name. The Surrey AA had angered most Striders by refusing to accept the club's application to change the name from 'Philips City Striders' to 'Croydon Striders', on the grounds that it would cause confusion with local rivals Croydon Harriers. The problem was eventually solved by the diplomatic skills of Striders' club secretary (and future chairman) Nigel Davidson, who persuaded both the Surrey AA committee and the Striders' membership that the club should be named 'Striders of Croydon' rather than 'Croydon Striders'. And that is how we got our rather distinctive name.

## 10 YEARS AGO: LOCAL ATHLETICS IN SUMMER 2006

On 24 May, Striders' track and field team did very well to finish second of the six competing clubs in their Rosenheim League match at a very wet Croydon Arena. Croydon Harriers won the match with 55 points, but Striders' total of 46 placed us ahead of Hercules-Wimbledon (44), South London Harriers (39), Serpentine (31), and Herne Hill (26). Striders were given a good start by Matt Morgan, who won the opening event, the 2000 metre steeplechase. Justin Macenhill was second in the 800 metres and third in the 200 metres. Scott Antony was second in the 400 metres, while Paul Finch was second in the high jump and fourth in the 1500 metres. Striders' women were short of numbers, but placed third in their match, with Clare McFadzean running well to take second place in the 3000 metres.

The Dorking 10-mile road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 4 June. Serena Stracey ran well to place 14th in the women's race, recording 71 minutes 37 seconds. Club colleague Kerry Backshell also ran well for 21st in exactly 74 minutes. In the men's race, Striders were led home by the Macenhill brothers. Justin ran well for 15th place in 59 minutes 30, while Damian was 40th in 62 minutes 55. Striders' third finisher was Pawel Bal who placed 67th in 65 minutes 45. Veteran David Batten was ninth in the over-50 category and 100th overall (68.31), while club secretary Chris Morton placed 118th (69.47).

The Dysart 10 kilometre road race, which incorporated the Surrey Championships, took place on 25 June. Striders were led home by Pawel Bal, who placed 29th in 36 minutes 20 seconds. Veteran John Foster was 74th in 39 minutes 21 with Darren Piper 83rd in 39 minutes 45. Striders' first woman was Kerry Backshell who placed 180th overall in 44 minutes 20, while Serena Stracey, despite suffering from a cough, was 191st (44.59).

The annual Elmore 7-mile road race took place in very hot conditions on 15 July. Striders were led home by Justin Macenhill, who ran very well to come third of the 342 finishers, covering the hilly seven-mile course in 40 minutes 54 seconds. Pawel Bal also ran well to place sixth in 42 minutes 08, while Damian Macenhill was 16th in 44 minutes 47. David Batten was fourth in the over-50 category and 26th overall, recording 46 minutes 14. Striders' women were led home by Serena Stracey who was the sixth woman finisher, placing 65th overall in 50 minutes 10. Striders had an impressive total of 25 finishers.

The Elmbridge 10 kilometre road race took place on 23 July. Striders were led home by Pawel Bal who placed 22nd in 35 minutes 52. Veteran David Batten again ran well to place 56th in 38 minutes 50, while Kerry Backshell placed 34th in the women's race (44.18).

The Surrey 5 kilometre road running championships took place at Wimbledon on 13 August. Pawel Bal placed 28th in 17 minutes 11 seconds. Damian Macenhill was 60th (18.21), while David Batten had an excellent run to place second in the over-50 category and 63rd overall (18.26). John Foster was 71st (18.46), Darren Piper 86th (19.22), Chris Morton 87th (19.24) and Nigel Finch 99th (19.55). Striders' first woman to finish was Karen Peake, who ran 24 minutes 29, placing 34th in the women's race and 191st overall.

2006 was Striders' second season of track and field competition in the Rosenheim League. Our men finished fifth, ahead of South London Harriers, while our women were sixth. Two of our athletes (Matt Morgan and Matt O'Hare) competed in all six fixtures. In the Southern Veterans League our men finished fifth, while our women were seventh.

The annual Surrey Road Relays took place at Wimbledon Park on 9 September. Striders' men finished in 13th place, with our fastest runner being Justin Macenhill (15.32). Our over-40 team placed 10th, with their best performance coming from David Batten (17.18).

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