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Editorial

It's another month where cross-country racing dominates these pages with county, regional and Surrey League fixtures all taking place. There's also a report from December's Southern Masters where an impressively large number of Stragglers made the trip to Oxford just before Christmas.

Recently, we hope, you will have received the first club re-registration reminder for the 2019-20 membership year. Please do action this request as soon as possible by acting on the instructions in the email – it will take just one or two minutes to complete - or notify us should you not wish to renew. One other reminder, it really helps the club if members pay their subs by direct debit using the GoCardless payment option. If you do not currently pay by GoCardless, you can change to that option when you re-register or at any time by going to My Account/Account Settings, clicking on the blue “Edit Settings” button which allows you to set up a direct debit mandate. Should you need to, you can cancel the mandate at any time by going to the same screens.

The deadline for February's Stragmag is Sunday 24th. Thank you to this month's contributors and to Dave for his editorial support.

Simon Webb Stragmag@stragglers.org



Stragglers News

More cross-country fixtures this month which you can read about in this issue. Most recently were the Southern Championships at the legendary Parliament Hill. First for our ladies' team was Sophie Biggs in 59th place over all from a field of 773. Our ladies' team – Sophie Biggs, Helen Davies, Julie Haworth and Mary Hide - came 51st out of 71.

Pete Gregorowski was our first man, and a sign of the strength of the field, in 341st position out of 1154. He led the Stragglers to 46th place out of 77, followed in by Chris Coakes, Richard Carter, Crispin Allen, Donovan Duffy and Malcolm Davies, with Roy Reeder just 1 second behind Malcolm.

Away from the winter mud, Ollie Bowers and Brigid Hibberd both secured personal best performances at the recent Victoria Park 10k. Ollie came 4th, just a few seconds away from a podium finish, in a time of 35:57. Brigid broke 45 minutes by one whole second – 44:59.

The second in the 2018/2019 5k handicap series takes place at the end of February – Thursday 28th. The clock will start from 7:45, with registration at the Hawker Centre from around 7:20. If you're available but don't intend to run, we'll need a few volunteers on the night, please let Simon Webb, Ian Callander or Phil Davies know if you can help out.

And whilst it may be several months away, the Stragglers committee have agreed the date for the 2019 AGM. It will take place at the Hawker Centre on Thursday July 11th.



Stragglers Masters on Big Adventure in Oxford

Race Report South of England Masters Cross Country Championships Horspath Oxford Saturday 8th December 2018

Runners in this race are advised to head towards the BMW Mini car plant in Oxford where a big poster in the car park welcomes visitors to 'a Mini Adventure'. Readers might cast their mind back to an advert in 2001 where the iconic car saved London from an alien invasion by racing all over the capital and luring the Martians into a cattle grid trap. One of the challenges the Mini has never undertaken though, maybe because it is too tough, is the Cross-Country Course which abuts the car plant in Horspath Country Park. This was the challenge left to runners taking part in the XC Masters Championships.

For the Stragglers, it was rather a big adventure (more like a mass invasion) as 27 of us made the trip from SW London to make our presence felt in the Southern. For those who have not taken part before, this is a large event, also hosting the Southern Inter-counties Competition for the senior and junior ladies with a veritable who's who of running clubs from across the South of England taking part.

Things got off to an interesting start when it was announced that the course had been changed at the last minute. The writer had advertised this race as a fast and very flat cross-country course and easy underfoot (helping no doubt to drive up numbers!). A quick jog around the course though confirmed the exact opposite, steep climbs with equally treacherous downhill that wouldn't disgrace Parliament Hill after a cattle stampede. So, bearing this in mind how did the Stragglers get on?

Firstly, for the men we were able to field a strong M40 team with Lewis Taylor, Martin Vivian, Andy Hoseason, Richard Carter, Richard Patient and Gareth Pritchard all 'Dukeing' it out the 10K course. In the end it was Richard Carter, Gareth and Lewis who came out on top to form the scoring 3 with Richard establishing a commanding lead but then only 8 seconds separating Gareth and Lewis with Martin only 3 seconds behind them. The M60 team was



made up by Phil Davies, David Brewin and Dave Griffiths who came up against a very strong set of M60 teams. Dave reported that he 'sort of enjoyed it' (or maybe that was just finishing the race!).

The M50 team comprised Dean Morley, Malcolm Davies, Roy Reeder and Mark Pattinson. Another set of tough opposition saw Roy, Malcolm and Dean spearhead the attack with that team achieving a creditable 8th place out of 18 teams.

Aggregating the age categories in the race, the men overall, were 11 out of 28 men's teams - a good result.



The ladies, were equally well represented. The L60 team made up of Janice Franks, Lynda Chase, Helene Hill and Sally Boulton were a creditable 4th with Lynda, Sally and Janice making up the first scoring three. I had high hopes for the L50 team made up of Liz Killip, Dee Smale, Phyllis Flynn, Brigid Hibberd, Patricia Ronksley and Ramona Thevenet, a particularly strong line up and they didn't disappoint with Liz, Dee and Phyllis making up the first scoring 3 in

this race and grabbing the Southern Masters Bronze medal. In addition, Liz grabbed an individual Southern masters Silver medal in the L55 category.

The L40s, however, were not to be out done. Clare Graham, Helen Davies and Sophie Biggs made up this team. Sophie had a storming run to finish 4th overall in the race and win an individual Southern Masters Silver medal in her age category. Clare and Helen the other L40s decided to have their own private battle with Helen just pipping Clare near the line and with both of them exceeding their expectations, managed to make up an L40 bronze winning team with Sophie, a great result!

The first 3 Straggler ladies over the line Sophie, Liz and Dee constituted the third placed team across all the age categories in the race, another great achievement.



Overall the feedback from this event was very positive with the day epitomising the Stragglers ethos of both mass participation and excellent performance. It was a big ask for everyone to go to Oxford on what is one of the busiest weekends of the year just before Christmas. As a result of the Stragglers efforts we were able to field complete teams in all age categories: L40, L50, L60, M40, M50 and M60 and the only club taking part to do so.

Thank you again everyone for running and well done on your efforts, I think you all enjoyed it and hopefully you've all forgiven me for the 'slightly' tougher course on the day!

Malcolm Davies
Stragglers Vets Captain

Full results here:

http://www.seaa.org.uk/images/2018/Endurance/2018_XC_Masters_Results_201218.pdf



Straggler Men Strong in Surrey League

A magnificent 36 Straggler men, the best turnout of this season so far, were at Mitcham Common for the 3rd match in the Division 2 Surrey League Cross Country Campaign. The race held in cool and windy conditions tested runners on a 3-lap undulating course over a number of short but steep hills, made up of landfill, on the site of a former waste tip.



The results, however, were anything but rubbish with the Stragglers producing a great 4th place A team finish and 3rd place in the B team competition. In addition, there were some brilliant individual performances, with Oli Garner producing his best of the season with a 20th place finish. Once again, the headlines go to Tim Haughian, bagging 3rd place in the race to go along with his 2nd place finishes from the first 2 matches. The result now leaves the Straggs looking up the table and eyeing a top half finish with one match to go, a great

position to be in back in Division 2. Roll on Lloyd Park! (Saturday February 9th)

Malcolm Davies



Straggler Ladies at Middlesex County XC Championships

Not by any means our strongest team on paper but on the day we had 6 determined ladies who supported each other well and produced a result which turned out to be much better than we could have expected. Conditions were good for racing, over the tried and tested course at Perivale, Greenford. The team on the day was Sophie, Liz, Brigid, Julie, Mary and Mirella. After a good warm up and recce of the course it was time to put on the fast shoes and get on to the start line after the traditional team photo and last minute removing of mud and clay from the cleats, which has a tendency to slow you down if not prepared when the gun goes.

So off they go and already Sophie and Liz have stamped a determined authority on the proceedings, the course is fast in places and undulating in others with 3 laps crammed into 8KM. Sophie ran determined and consistent throughout and looked to be having a good day of it finishing in a very creditable 9th place - a top 10 finish in your county championships is no mean feat and probably not far off getting a senior county vest. Incidentally, Middlesex performed well in last year's inter-county champs finishing 8th from 30 with Surrey taking the team and individual titles. Liz was the next one in for Straggs. I am sure I heard her say towards the end of the 2nd lap "I am not going round again", but this is a motivational tool that seems to work well for Liz and it did yet again on this occasion as she managed to tough it out and finish in 26th position. Good going for the "Road Runner".





Brigid and Julie completed the team positions with Brigid running strong and looking comfortable and Julie working very hard and using all her experience in order to hang on as the last but probably the most important scorer for the team. Mary and Mirella both put in good performances that ensured that if one of our front runners went lame that we would still have a team finish and both good for morale as each time they came round

there was a smile from each and a thankyou from Mirella.

Good team performance all round, well done! Results [here](#).

Kev Best



Keeping the 'International' Dream Alive

It's never too late to pull on that coveted international vest. England Athletics are looking for teams to represent England on the road at 10k, half marathon and marathon.

Selection is based on running in a qualifying event that has a standard for each masters age category. All the details are on the link below, but to summarise, if you have the required qualifying standard and you finish in the first 3 you will be selected to run for England in the main event for each distance.

We have several club members who easily meet the required qualifying standards and a few at this moment in time with the potential to finish in the first 3 of their age category at 10K. We have a few club members running in the Chichester 10k which is on Sunday 3rd February 2019, this is one of the qualifying events for selection to represent England in the Birmingham 10k which is on Sunday 26th May 2019.

The Stragglers see this and support it, as an outstanding opportunity for our senior members to have some reward and recognition for all the hours of hard work and dedicated training that we have put into our fantastic sport of running.

If you are interested please enter yourself for any or all of the events that you qualify for, if you don't qualify at the moment you can still enter these events in order to gain experience and who knows, next time you move up a category, you could be in with a shout?

Please let me know if you enter any of these races as I will be coordinating club member participation.

I will come back with a full report from the Chichester 10k and please email me if you have any questions that are not answered on the link [here](#).

Kev Best – Stragglers Head Coach

kevb52@yahoo.co.uk





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Future Races

The XC season reaches its conclusion in the coming weeks, and then attention switches to summer action. Plans will be announced soon for which races we're focusing on throughout the summer, but once again Green Belt Relay and Welsh Castles are top of our list. To enter one of our GBR teams please contact simonwebb79@gmail.com and for Welsh Castles wcr2019@stragglers.org.

February:

- Saturday 9th: Ladies' Surrey League Fixture 3, Richmond Park – Helene Hill
- Saturday 9th: Men's Surrey League Fixture 4, Croydon – Simon Brazil
- Saturday 23rd: National XC, Harewood House Leeds – Simon Webb
- Thursday 28th: Stragglers quarterly 5k Handicap – Hawker Centre, 7:30 pm

March:

- Saturday 2nd: Ladies Surrey League Fixture 4, Lloyd Park – Helene Hill
- Sat 30th: Ellis Cup/Dysart Trophy, Richmond Park

Team contacts:

Simon Brazil – simonbrazil@hotmail.co.uk

Helene Hill – Helene.hill@btinternet.com

Other races:

Sun 17th Feb: Valentines 10k – organised by 26.2. See [here](#) for details

Sun 24th Feb: Dash for the Splash 10k on Wimbledon Common – organised by Thames Hare and Hounds. See [here](#) for details.