



January 2017

Issue 328

Junior Stragglers in Cross-Country Action
January 2017 - County Championships & Surrey League



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Editorial

Welcome to the first Stragmag of 2017. This month all three of our cross-country teams have been in action again – read on for reports for ladies, men and juniors. The final fixture in the Surrey League is on February 11th and with our men's, and in particular ladies', teams pushing for promotion we need as many people available to run as possible. With Malcolm and Helen currently sunning themselves on the other side of the world (something about our men's captain reaching the big 50), vice captains Simon Brazil and Katherine Curtis Tyler can take names in their absence.

Away from the mud, this month we have a race report from a 10k in Battersea Park. With the winter races in full swing, Stragmag is always keen to receive your race reports, especially if it's somewhere a little further from home. See Lewis Taylor's report in this issue or Malcolm Davies' write up on the Gosport Half in the December issue as an example of exactly what we're looking for.

With our excellent new website now live we're looking for content which can make Stragmag different from the website and Peter Wedderburn's Stragmail.

The deadline for February's issue will be Friday 24th.



Simon Webb



Ladies Surrey League Division 2, Match 3, Lloyd Park, Saturday 14th January

It was another good turnout by the Stragglers with two competing teams at a very wintery Lloyd Park. As the freezing drizzle descended it was announced that the mid-day start was to be delayed by fifteen minutes to allow latecomers to get there. Luckily the regular tram service (1 minute from the venue) meant that we were all there in good time and it also gave us a good chance for lots of pre-race chat and friendly banter!

During our warm-up we had the opportunity to check out the difficult course which paid great dividends. Hats and gloves to the ready, we awaited the gun and started the two lap course. It was a tricky course for some. The terrain was very testing with its tight turns, challenging hilly parts and slippery downward slopes. Some of us wore spikes - Sally Hoyle a XC novice took to wearing her pretty new pink spikes which were no longer that colour at the finish!



Sarah Winter romped home as the first Straggler, followed by Karen Levene and Pam Whitter not far behind. Sally Hoyle and Kate Suttle finished within seconds of each other to complete the A Team. Kate had also never run a XC before and said she found it invigorating to run on a different terrain.

Brigid flew the flag for the B Team and the next four to score were Julie Haworth, Leigh Collins, Daniela Smale and Sabine Duffy. The teams were ably backed up and supported by Mirella Genziani, Lynda Chase, Penny Demetriou and Francesca Thomas. All helped the teams to finish 3rd and 9th respectively.

At present, out of the 38 teams in Division 2, Stragglers A Team are second overall and Stragglers B Team are 9th overall. We are striving to get to division 1. Only two teams will be promoted and we want to be one of them. Fulham are very close behind us and so we need everyone to turn out.

So, all out for the last race and let's show our mettle and our desire to get amongst the best in the top division. This race will be of great importance and significance to the club. We have all worked extremely hard this season and it will be such a shame if we fall at the last hurdle. On paper, we have this in our grasp and we all need to be there to fly the flag. The prize will be Division one and the ladies team will be a force to be reckoned with as we go from strength to strength. There will be much celebrating and bottles of fizz and a satisfying sleepy ride home if you're not driving. Please give this event a high priority and be a part of the club's success.

If you haven't told Helen Davies that you want to run, please let her or Katherine know ASAP. The next and final Surrey League XC race is Saturday 11th February at Coulsdon, Croydon at mid-day.

Pam Whitter

Team scores after 3 matches

Match	Match 1	Match 2	Match 3	Points	Position
WOK A	51	47	50	148	1
STR A	91	146	105	342	2
FUL A	181	101	88	370	3
ADV A	252	110	112	474	4
WIN A	149	274	152	575	5
WOK B	213	115	364	692	6
SOC A	399	250	199	848	7
STR B	259	291	301	851	8

Men's Cross Country at Cranford Park

On Saturday 14th January, we had another great turnout (28 Stragglers) for the Surrey League Division 3 Cross Country match held at Cranford Park. Despite being a wet and cold weekend we did get to glimpse the sun for the briefest of moments and the weather remained dry for the race. The course was pancake flat and consisted of three laps to total 5 miles. The lap was predominately on grass around the park with the final third through the woodland. At each subsequent lap the grass got more and more churned up, so those with spikes definitely held an advantage.

On the day, Stragglers came 4th, closely behind West 4 Harriers. The performance of the day was Fulham Running Club who certainly brought their A team to the event. This result leaves us in third place (behind Fulham in second and Striders of Croydon in first). However, West 4 have closed the gap to us so we need a strong turnout in the final race on 11 February at Lloyd Park to ensure we remain third in the league.

Everyone appeared to enjoy the event and throughout the field there were some close battles among the Stragglers, not least the battle for first Straggler where Rob Wilcox pipped Paul Bowden by one second. Well done to all the runners and spectators.

Dan Greenslade



Cross Country Club Championships

As well as Surrey League places and glory, there is also the small matter of the Stragglers XC club championships to be competed for.

After the latest XC fixtures and with just two races to go, Karen Levene leads the overall standings and the F35 category on 136 points. Tiff Gibson remains second and leader of Senior Ladies on 127 but Brigid Hibberd is close behind on 119 points, a score which also has her ahead in the F45 category, a mere one point ahead of ladies' captain Helen Davies (also F45) on 118. Just 1 point behind Helen is the leader of the F55 category Julie Haworth on 117.

Tiff's closest challenger for the SL prize is Leah Collins on 111. Sarah Winter is second in F35 on 105 and Gail Caruana is F55's second place runner on 98 points.

The men's competition is equally competitive. Ong-time leader Roy Reeder has been overtaken by Rob Wilcox, but there is just 6 points in it with Rob on 138 (and leading the senior man standings) and Roy on 132 (leading M50).

M40 is led by Gareth Pritchard on 119, with Donavon Duffy just 3 points behind on 116.

The senior man race is a close one with Oliver Bowers just behind Rob on 129 points and Tiago Ramos on 123.

We're definitely in for an exciting few weeks as the XC season reaches its climax – will you be part of it?

Simon Webb



Straggler Juniors at Cross Country

It's generally acknowledged that the local junior athletics scene is in great shape at the moment, measured by the quantity and quality of

field in the races. Maybe this has been stimulated by Mo Farah's successes which has made endurance running cool, or possibly it's the parkrun effect with increasing numbers of children participating in the sport? Likely it's a combination of both these factors and some others, but regardless of the reason it is excellent to report that Stragglers are playing an important part in this with the club being represented in increasing numbers at these events.

January is the peak of the junior XC season with races every weekend, and the recent wet weather has made conditions particularly challenging this year. The Straggler's 2016-17 junior squad has seen quite a few new joiners who are relatively inexperienced in the sport, but supported by their older team mates they've dealt with the training and racing really well and placings are continually improving.

Below are results from the County Championships and 3rd Surrey League fixture of the season, with accompanying photographs of some of the group in action during these races.

- **County Championships – Saturday 7th January**

MIDDLESEX	Hillingdon	
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U15		
Girls	47 Finishers	4k
32 nd	Phoebe Fennell	18:06

SURREY	Lloyd Park, Croydon	
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U13		
Girls	80 Finishers	3k
29 th	Maisie Jensen	11:52
55 th	Lucy Hoseason	12:46
66 th	Amber Bryan	13:35
68 th	Madeleine McGuigan	13:44
69 th	Rosie Watts	14:02

U13 Boys	84 Finishers	3k
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28th Spencer Bateman 10:41

50th Ollie Emmet 11:18

U15 Girls	58 Finishers	4k
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34th Poppy Jensen 17:41

U15 Boys	85 Finishers	4k
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23rd Ben Dibley 14:47

- **Surrey League – Saturday 14th January**
GIRLS – Lloyd Park – Full Results [HERE](#)

U13 Girls	62 Finishers	
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14th Maisie Jensen 12:12

37th Sophie Desmond (U11) 13:16

41st Lucy Hoseason 13:35

42nd Amber Bryan 13:39

44th Madeleine McGuigan 13:52

57th Chloe Hoseason (U11) 15:16

U15 Girls	28 Finishers	
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9th Poppy Jensen 16:52

BOYS – Mitcham Common – Full Results [HERE](#)

U13 Boys	46 finishers	
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8 th	Spencer Bateman	18:20
10 th	Ollie Emmet	18:59
33 rd	Ethan Russell	21:36
45 th	Jaden Russell	25:25

**U15
Boys 40 finishers**

10 th	Ben Dibley	17:52
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**U17
Boys 16 finishers**

3 rd	Kieran Desmond	17:19
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Battersea Park 10k Race Report

On Saturday I completed my first ever race organised by the very popular London based <http://www.runthrough.co.uk/>. The idea for me was to capitalise on a recent spate of good form and to revisit a long overdue 10k PB.

The 10k is 4 laps around Battersea Park and the course is flat and fast. For most Stragglers this is not too far to drive and there is pay and display parking just inside the park very close to the start / finish area at the bandstand.



Sat 21st was a glorious clear blue sky day but with temperatures dipping below zero the course was icy. The registration was well organised with chip timing and a bag drop. The race is probably unique in that you can choose to run 5k or 10k right up until the start and the 5k goes off 5 mins before the 10k. Once underway in the 10k the course was

not as crowded as Kingston or bushy parkruns. I was though the only Straggler amongst ~350 runners that day.

I was able to keep a good pace up and locked onto the shoulder of a stranger who turned out to be a great pacer. There were several iced up puddles with little orange cones on them but other than that the course was all tarmac paths with no problems. As we got into the 3rd lap I was still with my new pacer although I was able to edge away as we got into the last lap just by maintaining pace. In the end, I finished 41:08 which was a PB for me by several minutes.

There was a good reason though; last year I approached Duncan Gaskell to give me a plan to run a sub-20 5k. With his guidance, I trained on his plan for about 8 weeks and finally ran a 19:59 just before Christmas and have since gone quicker. I would suggest anyone who wants to get quicker or has any specific running goal talk to Duncan. For me I found I really needed structure to make improvements. Duncan gives his time to the club and personalised plans to members for free. This is something we should be very grateful for and totally recommended

Lewis Taylor



Stragglers welcome parkrun Founder for School Holiday Training Session

The Stragglers Juniors Christmas training session is always a lot of fun, and the recent one was particularly successful. It was held in perfect weather in Bushy Park on the morning of 29th December, with the session objective being “how to run a parkrun PB”.

We were very fortunate to be joined by the person who knows more about parkrun than anyone else – founder Paul Sinton-Hewitt CBE. We ran as a group taking breaks along the way to focus on how to tackle each section of the course, with Paul delivering super coaching points to the young athletes. The session was concluded with the ever-popular team relays before returning to the Pheasantry for some well-deserved refreshments.

Running a fast parkrun time in the early months of the year has added significance for juniors since it also serves as the qualification criteria to gain a place in the London Mini-Marathon (which is run over the final 3 miles of the course in advance of the main race). There are only 6 places available per age-category for each borough, and so these are very keenly contested with the standard becoming increasingly higher each year. Stragglers manage the Kingston borough team under the leadership of Phil Davies, and I'm certain that the session we held in Bushy Park with Paul will have boosted chances of the young Stragglers making the team.



Jim Desmond



Stragglers Summer Road Series

The summer road series is made up of selected road races (a total 10 this year) where you can accumulate points towards the Stragglers Road Club Championships competition. 7 of the races also form the Surrey Road league competition where we are competing against other local clubs, so there is plenty for us to aim at there.

This year, we will be spicing things up by having more ways to recognize member's participation and performances. There has traditionally been the annual club 10K championships, and this year there will also be a half-marathon, 10-mile and 5K club championship.

There will be further comms. about the competition and events, and also information from Kev Best about how the Structured Training Group will be helping target races, in particular the summer 10K races.

The first of the new club championship races will be the half marathon championship. We are nominating the Ranelagh Harriers Richmond Half Marathon for this competition and this will kick off our summer road series on Sunday 30th April. For those of you who have not done this local event before it is a fast, flat half marathon with plenty of PB potential starting and finishing near Richmond, heading out towards Hampton Court and then back along the river to Ham. This one is a favourite of many Stragglers. At £18 for affiliated runners it is also a good value half-marathon event.

Entries for this fill up so don't miss out! Click on the link below for further details and to enter.

<https://www.sportsystems.co.uk/ss/event/RichmondHalfMarathon20172>

The Stragglers will be awarding prizes for the first Straggler male and female, and for age category winners.

We are hoping that as many Stragglers as possible do this event, to kick the Summer series off in style!

Malcolm Davies

European Nordic Skiing Opportunity

I intend - like last year - to organise for the Stragglers but also for members of my rowing club, the Skiff Club, a tour to a cross country or Nordic Skiing ski event - not the famous 90 km Wasa run in Sweden in March, but only a 30/33km run (or 8km, if you are not fit for the long distance) in the Sauerland Mountain area in the former British Occupation Area of Germany, in the federal state of Northrhine-Westphalia. This mountain area is south of Dortmund. The event has taken place for 30 years, but only every 2nd year there was enough snow. If the event will be cancelled, the registration fee (EUR 35 only for the long distance and for 8km only EUR 15), will be refunded - but it can anyway be paid cash when we arrive.

Travel should be done by car; I have the mandatory (under German traffic law) winter tyres on my car. The journey takes 8 - 10 hours (including the time - 2 hours - on the Ferry).

The race takes place mainly on a sea level of 700 - 800 meters and the course is not only flat, but goes up and downhill. Participants should be able to ski downhill (at least the so called "snow plough"). Participants who don't have Nordic skis, sticks and shoes can rent them there, and I can also offer 2 pairs. I would go there with my car and can take 3 more participants, then 4 in my car with 5 seats (a Citroen C4 Picasso). I have a roof box for skis and sticks. The homepage for the event is unfortunately only in German, despite that this is an international event. The links for accommodation lead to pages in German and Dutch, as most foreigners come from Holland. I'll be happy to help with translations.

the link: www.skiloap.de

Skiloap is local slang and means Skirun or Skirace; in high German Skilauf.

The male participants needed last time 2 - 4 hours and 1 participant 5 hours. The Ladies approx 30 minutes more. I assess, if someone prepares for a 20 km or half marathon, she or he is fit enough for this event. Otherwise anyone who can run 30 minutes - 1 hour can run the 8km,

B+B and Gasthoefe (local pubs with rooms) and also Hotels are cheap: B+B (Pension) take between EUR 16 (= GBP 14) and EUR 147 per Person (but most offers below EUR 50) per night in a single

room including breakfast. If a 4 bedroom is taken, the price per head and night starts at EUR 8 (without breakfast).

I assume petrol (my car takes 5-6 litre Diesel per 100km) would be approx GBP 25 per person; Diesel is cheaper in continental Europe than in UK. The ferry costs today (Dover - Dunkirk - takes 2 hours and better than Dover - Calais, you save 30 km driving) GBP 128, so per person if 4 in a car GBP 32. So travel by car GBP 55-60 per person if 4 in a car.

I advise to travel there on Friday 10th February, use the Saturday to rent Skis (if required) and get them waxed and train a little bit and the Monday is needed to travel back. The race starts at 9 a.m. on the Sunday, thus ends between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., thus it is too late to drive home same day.

On the home page on the left you can see the race course ("Streckenverlauf"), general advice ("Allgemeine Hinweise"- in German), Ergebnisse = results and Unterkunft = accommodation. Due to global warming and the risk of not having enough snow, I would only book + register 1 week before. But those who are interested should prepare and contact me latest Saturday 4th February. It would be ideal to meet then on Sunday 5th so that I can answer questions, know the participants and get the payment from each participant for the ferry. Currently there is much more snow than last year, when the race had to be cancelled due to lack of snow. They have currently in the highest resort, Winterberg more snow (125cm on 800 meters level) than in the German Alps (Oberstdorf: 115cm on 2200meters).

Hubert Cibis

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Did I (not) not like that?



Following the death of former England manager Graham Taylor, Richard Steeden shared this photo to Facebook, taken at a Watford FC kit sponsors event in 1999. Whilst not a running related topic, I thought the picture would be of interest to enough Stragmag readers to include it, and some words from Richard.

Graham Taylor was (is) very much the hero to my generation of Watford supporters, growing up in the late 1970s and early 80's and experiencing a real-life Roy of the Rovers story as our team of Fourth Division hopefuls and underachievers transformed to runners up in the Football League to the great Bob Paisley's Liverpool and a Wembley FA Cup Final - all in the space of 7 years. For a Club that until that time had spent only 3 years of its entire history outside of Divisions 3 and 4, it really was achieving the impossible dream.

At a time when football was plagued by violence & racism on and off the pitch, Graham Taylor in partnership with Elton John simply did things differently. They built a Club almost from scratch and took it out to its Community. In an era when most football grounds caged in the supporters, there were no fences at Vicarage Road. Between 1977 to 1984, there were 3 promotions, Runners up to Liverpool, a run in the UEFA cup, an FA Cup Final, two semi-finals, three quarter finals.

Through to 1987, Watford finished in the top half of the Division One table every season. And when GT returned as Manager a decade later, a club that had slipped back into what was now called League One achieved two remarkable promotions to find itself back in the top flight in 1999.

By the time of his second spell as Manager in 1997 (after his time as England manager), it was like a father figure returning and my generation of supporters revelled in it. The difference that he made to so many of our lives is hard to do justice to. The highlight and a day that for him may have killed many demons was a play off final win at Wembley over Bolton Wanderers, inspired by two unlikely

hero's in Nicky Wright and Allan Smart who he'd plucked earlier that season from Carlisle United.



Like many Watford supporters, I've got my treasured mementos - a letter read out at my wedding, since donated to Watford museum - 'have a wonderful day although it won't be quite as good as Watford 2 Bolton 0 in the play-off final at Wembley'. It turned out that another random Watford supporter asked him to be his best man, GT of course obliged.

As Chairman between 2009 and 2012, he helped guide the Club through an era of financial crisis before the Club had the good fortune to be acquired by the Pozzo family from Italy. GT remained a regular presence as Life President when media commitments allowed.

News of his sudden death felt like a personal loss, the Father figure who inspired a whole community to go beyond what they thought was possible.

A few GT quotes to finish with -

“I asked Elton what was his ambition for the club? I thought he would say promotion, perhaps Second (tier) Division football. He replied that he wanted the club to get into Europe. I thought: ‘You will do for me pal.’” (1977) “Do you want to get to the top, because that is where I am heading? So, who among you are coming with me?” - to the players on first meeting them. (1977) And finally, undated and often repeated ... “All that I ask is that you give of your best”.

Richard Steeden



Future Races

Club cross-country priorities marked in bold. Club relay priorities also in bold. Club priority road races to be confirmed.

Of particular importance is the February 11th cross country fixtures in the Surrey League so do make yourself available if at all possible.

February

- Sun 5: Watford Half Marathon
- **Sat 11: Ladies XC Surrey League race 4 – Farthing Down, Coulsdon**
- **Sat 11: Men's Surrey League XC Race 4 – Lloyd Park**
- Sun 12: Valentines 10k – Chessington (organized by 26.2)
- Sun 12: Wokingham Half Marathon
- Sun 19: Hampton Court Half Marathon
- Sun 19: Middlesex Masters Cross-Country Championships - Berkeley Fields, Greenford
- Thu 23: Stragglers Quarterly Handicap – Hawker Centre
- Sat 25: National XC Championships – Wollaton Park, Nottingham
- Sun 26: Run the Streets Kingston Half Marathon

March

- **Sat 4: Dysart Cup & Ellis XC Trophy - Richmond Park**
- Sun 19: Fleet Half Marathon
- Sun 19: Surrey Spitfire 20
- Sun 26: Cranleigh 15/21 Miles
- Sun 26: Wymondham 20 – Wymondham, Norfolk. Organized by Wymondham AC and with former (still second claim) Straggler Andrew Lane as race director

April

- Sun 2 Paddock Wood Half Marathon
- Sun 9: Fuller's Thames Towpath 10
- Sun 9 Brighton Marathon (full but the club has places and of course there is the charity option too)
- Sun 23 London Marathon
- Sun 30 Ranelagh Half-marathon

May

- Sat 20/Sun 21 Stragglers Green Belt Relay

June

- Dorking 10 miles
- Sat 10/Sun 11 Welsh Castles Relay
- Sun 18 Ranelagh Richmond 10K

