



*February 2018*

*Issue 341*



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## *Editorial*

After a quiet start to the year, this issue of Stragmag has a lot going on. The headline news this month concerns our Men's cross-country team who have secured their first promotion in a decade and a return to Surrey League Division 2.

Also in this issue, we announce the Summer Grand Prix fixtures – formerly the Summer Road Series. 11 dates across the summer with a range of distances from 5k to half marathon, with some old favourites and new additions to the schedule and we hope there is something for everyone.

Some work has gone on behind-the-scenes on club communications. Stragmail is now going to be sent out every two weeks and will arrive in your inbox on a Tuesday lunchtime – by the time you read Stragmag you may well have seen the latest of these. We're also trying to be more active with our social media channels. I've been given the lofty sounding title of Communications Coordinator, which essentially means if you have news or anything which the whole club should be knowing about, send it to me and it will be given to Andy for Stragmail or Alan for the website – and probably end up in Stragmag too.

Deadline for the next Stragmag issue will be Friday March 23rd, and thanks as ever to everyone who has contributed to this one and to Dave Griffiths for making it look nice and spelling mistake-free.

Simon Webb  
[Stragmag@stragglers.org](mailto:Stragmag@stragglers.org)



# *Stragglers News*

February saw the climax of the Surrey League cross-country season, with contrasting fortunes for our Straggler teams.

The men claimed a victory on the day at Lloyd Park, adding to the one they picked up at Roundshaw in December, and in doing so were promoted to Division 2 – finishing second in the table behind Walton. A full report on the day follows this news round up.

It was disappointment for the ladies however, as they dropped out of Division 1 after one season. This doesn't tell half the story though as they began the day outside the relegation places and only missed out on staying up by a mere 15 points, proving this is a team which is good enough to be there and is well capable of a return to the top league in 12 months' time.

Stragglers co-hosted the day at Lloyd Park and great work was done by Malcolm Davies and Peter Wedderburn and around 20 volunteers, who turned out to help make the day a success in horrible weather conditions.

The final XC fixture of the winter sees a return to Richmond Park and the Ranelagh hosted Dysart Cup and Ellis Trophy – our ladies team have a title from 2017 to defend. If you would like to run please let Malcolm or Helen know before hand as, with an expected large Straggler turn out, it helps both our team captains and the race organisers if you are entered before.

This will be followed by the end of Cross-Country Season Social. This will be at the Rose of York Pub on Petersham Road, TW10 6UY (about a five-minute walk from the Petersham Gate of Richmond Park and Ranelagh Harriers HQ). We'll be there from about 5.00pm onwards after the race, til late! All welcome, even if you're not planning to run, and the club is paying for some food to be available.

From April the Structured Training Group will be hosting Thursday evening track sessions at St Marys, likely to conclude with a 5k track race in June. Start time will be 7:30pm. Sessions cost £3 and anyone interested need only to turn up – no prior booking required.

In addition, Kev Best is already holding Tuesday night sessions at St Mary's. Start time 7pm with a £3 fee for use of the track.

Our kit retailer has moved!

You may have seen in the last Stragmail that Up and Running, who sell our kit and used to be in Ultimate Outdoors in Kingston, now have their own shop in Surbiton. Their new address is:

Up & Running

2 Ditton Road

Surbiton

KT6 6QZ

Email: [Surbiton@upandrrunning.co.uk](mailto:Surbiton@upandrrunning.co.uk)

<http://upandrrunning.co.uk/surbiton>

Entries for the 2018 Cabbage Patch 10, a race in which the Stragglers have always been closely involved since its inaugural running in 1982, are now open and selling well. As always, Keith Haworth will be organising the army of Straggler marshals and we would encourage as many club members as possible to volunteer – it's a great event and very rewarding, including a free meal in the Cabbage Patch post-race as well as a race t-shirt.

If you are even keener to run, entries can be made here:

<https://register.primoevents.com/ps/event/2018CabbagePatch10>



# *Straggler Men Lord It at Lloyd*

## *Surrey League Men Division 3 Race Saturday*

### *10th February Lloyd Park*

Saturday 10th of February saw the Straggler men go into action for the final fixture of the 2017/18 Surrey league campaign in a good position to try and secure their first promotion in a decade and end a three-year exile in Division 3. As if this wasn't pressure enough, there had been history of Stragglers narrowly missing out on promotion at the same venue in previous years. The men went into the fixture in second place, with 2 to be promoted, with Woking AC putting on pressure in third place.

The Stragglers were also responsible for organising the Division 3 & 4 race, so a real army of Stragglers both runners and volunteers descended on a rather wet and windy Croydon for the crunch match. So how did the men get on?

In the event it was a 'no contest' with the 31 strong Straggler team overwhelming the rest of the field, with Woking, in particular, failing at the final hurdle and finishing last in the match. It was left to Ful on Tri to provide the strongest challenge to Stragglers on the day but their points total of 337 was some way off the excellent score of 267 recorded by the men in yellow.



There were a whole series of highlights from the 5 mile race run over challenging hilly and muddy terrain.

For the A team, the familiar names all featured heavily with Rob Wilcox the first Straggler over the line and 7th

overall in the Div 3 race. Jim Lurkins,

Chris Walmsley, Roy Reeder, Simon Ford and Jonathon Ormerod all made the top 10. In particular Chris recorded arguably his best performance of the season and this from someone who only took up cross country when he had his arm twisted. Jonathon also performed admirably having had to run to the race from Croydon due to

transport difficulties and making the start line with about 10 seconds to spare (or maybe he was just warming up!).

Of the other top 10 scorers, Richard Baggott, who had not made the top 10 this season, saved his best till last and had a great race to 'put one over' his old club. Andy Hoseason, who has only started running cross country for the Straggs this season but has been 'there or thereabouts' broke into the A team scorers this time around with a storming run. There were, however, two performances that demand to be picked out. Andrew Tugwell, making his first appearance for the Straggler men recorded a 22nd place in the Div 3 race and finished 3rd straggler over the line. More of the same please! This was, however, all ultimately trumped by Kieran Desmond who was moving up from the Straggler juniors to the Senior men's race. Kieran had an absolutely sensational debut finishing as second Straggler in the race and recording 10th in the overall Division 3 match, a brilliant performance (and a great reward for the work done by Jim Desmond with our junior Stragglers). Both these athletes specialise in Triathlon, demonstrating the value of cross training....

The Straggler B Team continued the theme of the whole season by beating up the opposition with Ful on Tri being the only serious challengers in this category. The scorers were Malcolm Davies, Crispin Allen, Dean Morley, Jim Desmond, Jonathan Davies, Gareth Pritchard, Tiago Ramos, Steven Clelland (making his Stragglers debut) Lewis Taylor and Trevor Ford, quite a team!

The Stragglers had once again had put on a quite magnificent performance with the 31 strong team being the best club representation in the Division 3 race by some margin. This is something we've done consistently across all four Surrey league fixtures, a very heartening experience.

At the end of the match, everyone, both runners and volunteers then quickly made for the nearest cafe or pub to try and get warm and dry and to contemplate next season. Division 2 here we come!

Malcolm Davies

## *Parliament Hill race report*

Many a seasoned Straggler has been heard to remark, usually from the warmth and dry of the Hawker Centre or a pub, often with beer in hand, that all cross-country runners should do Parliament Hill at least once. And so it was that 35 men and ladies (plus a number of juniors) ventured to North London for the National Cross-Country Championships and the opportunity to test themselves against the strongest competition of the winter, both in personnel and mud!

Those same seasoned Stragglers who were making their return to Hampstead Heath would later tell first-timers that conditions 'weren't too bad for Parliament Hill', but this still meant numerous patches of thick, squelchy mud and some challenging hills.

First up (following the junior's races) were 1113 ladies, with the Stragglers team (first 4 to score) showing the class which comes from a year in Surrey League Division 1, finishing an impressive 31st out of 112. Scoring runners were Sophie Biggs, Sarah Winter, Helen Davies and Karen Levene, full results can be found [here](#).

After they'd churned the Heath up that little bit more, it was the men's turn. The Stragglers finished a pleasing 76th out of 162 in a highly competitive field of 2328, with our 6 scoring runners Rob Wilcox, Oliver Garner, Paul Bowden, Donovan Duffy, Crispin Allen and Malcolm Davies – the latter two separated by just two seconds! Results [here](#).

With thousands of thirsty runners and a Scotland *vs.* England rugby international, the pubs of Kentish Town also had a very successful evening. After a tough but enjoyable day out at the Nationals, we move on to Richmond Park next Saturday and the Dysart and Ellis Cup, where our ladies team have a title to defend!





## *Final Surrey League Tables*

### *Men season scores: 2017-18 Div 3*

#### Team scores after 4 matches

Match	WAL	STR	WOK	W4H	FOT	262	ADV	SUR
Match 3	261	252	335	390	442	578	584	637
Match 1	232	294	349	385	482	414	651	653
Match 2	208	331	288	386	406	445	669	588
Match 4	357	267	612	454	337	510	549	575
<b>Points</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>1144</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>1615</b>	<b>1667</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>2453</b>	<b>2453</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

### *Ladies season scores: 2017-18 Div 1*

#### Team scores after 4 matches

Match	Match 1	Match 2	Match 3	Match 4	Points	Position
THH A	75	110	57	63	305	1
C/C A	118	67	85	107	377	2
SLH A	93	179	143	132	547	3
HHH A	201	140	155	125	621	4
BEL A	167	181	123	173	644	5
RAN A	135	172	187	182	676	6

<b>Match</b>	<b>Match 1</b>	<b>Match 2</b>	<b>Match 3</b>	<b>Match 4</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Position</b>
H/W A	135	114	267	180	696	7
KEN A	150	173	234	213	770	8
REI A	168	225	267	221	881	9
FUL A	318	333	293	255	1199	10
C/C B	439	314	249	327	1329	11
E&E A	340	213	474	312	1339	12
DUL A	320	400	336	290	1346	13
FOT A	280	275	402	414	1371	14
STR A	385	299	316	388	1388	15
THH B	375	500	249	336	1460	16
WOK A	370	410	315	398	1493	17
HHH B	851	266	409	250	1776	18
KEN B	403	403	420	627	1853	19
RAN B	496	521	562	497	2076	20
SLH B	367	534	599	608	2108	21
DUL B	478	642	582	509	2211	22
STR B	692	552	541	697	2482	23
FUL B	592	675	710	577	2554	24

<b>Match</b>	<b>Match 1</b>	<b>Match 2</b>	<b>Match 3</b>	<b>Match 4</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Position</b>
FOT B	675	843	643	555	2716	25
REI B	565	757	1064	706	3092	26
H/W B	678	517	1210	695	3100	27
BEL B	882	1130	410	848	3270	28
WOK B	722	869	971	995	3557	29
E&E B	913	915	941	921	3690	30

Our men's team success overall is reflected in both the V40 and V50 age groups. Chris Walmsley was 4th ranked across the season with Crispin Allen just behind him in 5th place. Stragglers dominated the V50 age group with Roy Reeder top of the pile just ahead of captain Malcolm Davies. Mark Pattinson (4th) and Steve Smith (5th) confirming what fantastic strength in depth we have for this age group.

### **Leading Individuals (40+)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Club Total</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Robert Lloyd Smith (V40) SUR	9	[2, 3, 2, 2]
Justin Mitchell (V45) WOK	25	[5, 7, 5, 8]
Ed Francis (V45)	262 38	[6, 12, 11, 9]
Chris Walmsley (V40) STR	41	[11, 11, 14, 5]
Crispin Allen (V45) STR	45	[7, 14, 12, 12]

### **Leading Individuals (50+)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Club Total</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Roy Reeder (V50) STR	5	[2, 1, 1, 1]
Malcolm Davies (V50) STR	9	[1, 3, 2, 3]
David Williamson (V50) TAD	17	[4, 6, 5, 2]

Name	Club Total	Positions
Mark Pattinson (V55)	STR 47	[8, 16, 14, 9]
Steve Smith (V55)	STR 47	[12, 12, 13, 10]

There was Straggler representation in the best performers for the ladies too with Juliet Cleghorn ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the V50 category.



## *Stragglers Half-Marathon Championships*

The Richmond Half-Marathon on Sunday 6th May will be The Stragglers 2018 Half-Marathon Championships. This does sell out, so [enter](#) now with 10 weeks of training to go. Awards will be presented to the first male and female Straggler over the line, and for the age categories: M40, M50, M60, F35, F45, F55, F65. The Half-Marathon will be one of the early races in this Summer's Grand Prix competition where you can compare and compete against your fellow Stragglers. Some dates are still to be confirmed, but for an idea of what is being planned see the Future Races section at the end of this issue, and look out for an announcement of the confirmed schedule in a Stragmail on Tuesday 13th March.



# *Summer Relays: Green Belt and Welsh Castles*

## *Green Belt Relay*

The Stragglers are the proud organisers of the Green Belt Relay which has been running since 1995. For many Stragglers and for other clubs this is one of the highlights of the running calendar. I first ran this one a few years ago, it's a brilliant weekend and I wouldn't miss it for anything.

### **What is the Green Belt Relay?**

In a 'nutshell' the Green Belt Relay is a 22-stage running relay race around 220 miles of the Green Belt around the outside of London over a single weekend.

### **Date**

Saturday 19th May / Sunday 20th May 2018

### **Route**

It starts at Hampton Court Palace on Saturday morning and runs in a clockwise direction around outer London finishing back at the Hawker Centre in Kingston late Sunday afternoon. It runs through Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey! The course mainly follows footpaths, towpaths or minor roads and is generally very scenic.

### **Teams**

Runners are part of a team of 11 people, and each runner runs one stage on Saturday and one stage on Sunday. Although the race is a relay, each stage starts at a fixed time (i.e. a staggered relay race).

This year there will be three Stragglers' teams: men's, vets and ladies, competing against 47 other teams.

### **Recommended fitness levels to take part**

Whilst the stages vary in distance and terrain, as you have to run on both days you should generally be fit to half-marathon distance. Stages are graded 1 to 10 (10 being the hardest), and we aim to give team members stages they are comfortable with.

## Stage allocations

As well as taking into consideration fitness levels, we will try to allocate legs that fit in with other plans you have over the weekend.

## Entry fee

To run, will cost £25 (excellent price for two runs!), and you receive a GBR tee-shirt.

## To enter

If you would like to run or would like to find out more information email [Malcolm Davies](#) or [Helen Davies](#).

We are also seeking assistance before, during and after the race with course marking. Kevin Price, on behalf of Race Director Peter Kennedy, will gather names and interest so if you can assist please email [Kevin Price](#).

## *Welsh Castles Relay*

The following month, over the weekend of June 8th to 10th, we're heading back to Wales for one of our favourite events of the year, the Welsh Castles Relay.

Over half the 40 places in the two Straggler teams of Open and Vets are filled so if you want to be part of some more Straggler tourism fill out the form and read all about it [here](#).



## *Punchbowl 20 Miler*

What do you seek when you enter a race? A PB, a fancy medal and a goodie bag perhaps? The Punchbowl Marathon won't give you any of the above but I'm pretty sure most who participate in this event take away fond memories of a challenging day and vow to return.



It is organised by the Long Distance Walkers Association with a 20 and a 30 mile option. Starting and finishing in the village of Witley, the route runs through the landscapes of Thursley, Ockley and Hindhead Common with sections along the rim of the Devil's Punchbowl, giving beautiful views of the deep hollow. There are no marshals or signs to help you navigate the course. Instead, you are given a route description written in a cryptic code. Here's an extract:

“1.4M Cross Rd & along Fp opposite. In 25y, at T-junc TL. In 160y (Wmp) TL on X-path & in 160y FL. In 60y TL & in 70y thru wooden posts & BR thru car park to Rd. TR on verge. In 100y cross Rd to far verge”. As a newcomer to the event I was glad Phil “Punchbowl” Davies had entered as I could stop worrying about getting lost and take advantage of his knowledge of where all the twists and turns and steep slopes were.

We had entered the 20-miler and after the walkers had departed we set off in a mass start at 8:30am. Soon we were out of the village and running into the woodland, then onto the green and purple colours of Thursley Common. The trail took us through bracken, purple moor grass, golden heather, flowering gorse bushes and wild thyme. The

area has a rich variety of birdlife but we didn't see any woodlarks, Dartford warblers or hawfinch that Phil assured me breed here. As I puffed my way up a muddy slope I reminded him we weren't here to bird watch, the main task was to decipher the instructions and navigate our way around the undulating course.

Despite this hint, as we picked our way up a rocky hill, my birding companion managed to keep an eye on the sky and spot a red kite being harassed by a gull and he also found time to peek in a few barns in the hope of finding a barn owl nest.

The event is a "challenge walk" not a race, so out goes race-day stress and instead we could relax and take pleasure in running and appreciate the scenery as we passed through the various woods, fields and heather-covered heath. After a few miles we reached the first checkpoint where cheerful LDWA volunteers offered us a fine selection of snacks and drinks to keep us going.

Refreshed, we continued and passed through Hankley Common, a large sandy heathland. The area is owned by the Ministry of Defence and we should have guessed from the sharp cracking sounds erupting from the woods that there was trouble ahead. The military were carrying out war games and had closed off the very path we needed to take. The options were wait for them to finish or go out of our way to avoid the gunfire. We chose the detour and trotted off on a long sandy crescent that gifted us the joy of a long hill.

At the second checkpoint we were the first customers and had our pick of the refreshments. We took a few jelly babies and a swig of squash and then we were off on the home stretch. Only four miles to the finish and it passed quickly as we left the heath and ran through a series of fields. There are no supporters lining the course, but the camaraderie of other runners and walkers and the beautiful surroundings help lift the spirit.

In the final leg a handsome herd of Highland cattle was the closest to support we enjoyed as their indifferent gaze followed us as we scurried past. As I ran across Witley recreation ground towards the finish, I was thinking about the many things I had enjoyed about this event and was grinning to myself because I simply felt carefree.



We were welcomed home by a smiling LDWA volunteer who congratulated us and offered soup, sandwiches and salty snacks. At the end of the event, in the hum of post-run banter, runners were promising themselves that next time, they'd enter the 30 miler, train harder, run further, and run faster. However, training resolutions, like DOMS, fade. I, on the other hand, inspired by the Punchbowl, intend to start training for an ultra. Soon. I promise.

Pedro Das Gupta



## *Straggtri Encourage All Stragglers to, er, Try a Tri?*

On the Morning of Sunday 27th May the XCL Leisure Centre in Wlaton is hosting a free triathlon, and Straggtri are encouraging club members who are either new to or less experienced at the multi-sport event to join them.

“INTOTRI was founded to show a completely different side of the sport. People of all ages, from novice to running mermaid on wheels, can participate in our triathlon events which emphasise finishing over winning. The focus is on challenging yourself, having fun and embracing a healthy lifestyle. So get INTOTRI with the “parkrun of the triathlon world”, a grassroots initiative powered by volunteers.

“A swimming costume, any road worthy bike, helmet and a pair of trainers and you are ready to get INTOTRI. Front crawl or breaststroke, all in one go or stop after every length, the choice is yours. We group swimmers by ability to make it fun for everyone.

### WHAT ARE THE DISTANCES?

- Senior Short (15y+) – 400m swim – 10k bike – 2.5k run
- Senior Long (17y+) – 400m swim – 20k bike – 5k run”

For more on the event visit <https://intotri.com/event/freetri-20/>

## *Stragglers and Ranelagh Junior Running Group Dates*

Another summer of races get underway at the end of April. Below are the dates and venues:

Thursday 26th April

Thursday 24th May

Thursday 14th June

Thursday 28th June

Thursday 12th July

Thursday 30th August

As this is the 15th year this event – in its various guises and names – has taken place and the organisers are planning something to mark the anniversary at the end of the summer, news to follow in future issues, on the Stragglers website and on the evenings listed above.



## *Future Races*

The below list is divided into club priority fixtures and some others which you may like to consider entering.

### **March**

- Sat 3: Dysart Cup and Ellis Trophy XC – Richmond Park (Club XC Qualifying)
- Sun 18: Southern Road Relays (ladies only) – Milton Keynes
- Sun 25: Middlesex Masters Cross Country – Royston (yes, in Cambridgeshire)

## April

- Sun 22: London Marathon (and Straggler post-race social TBC)
- Sat 28 (TBC): Mob Match v Sutton Runners – Nonsuch parkrun

## May

- Sun 6: Ranelagh Richmond Half Marathon
- Sat 19/Sun 20: Green Belt Relay

## June

- Sun 3: Dorking 10
- Fri 8/Sun 10: Welsh Castles Relay
- Sun 17: Ranelagh Richmond 10k
- Thu 21: Stragglers 10k Championships – Hawker Centre
- Sat 30: Mob match v Ranelagh – Crane parkrun

## July

- Sun 8: Claygate 5 (miles)
- Sat 14: Elmore 7 (miles)
- Sun 22: Elmbridge 10k
- Fri 27: Wedding Day 7k

## August

- Sun 12: Wimbledon 5k

## Other races:

## March

- Sun 4: River Thames Spring Half Marathon (Walton)

**April:**

- Sun 1: The Royal Borough of Kingston Half Marathon
- Sun 8: Paddock Wood Half Marathon (Kent)
- Sun 8: Fuller's Towpath 10