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*Issue 350*



# *In this issue*

## Contents

Editorial .....	3
Stragglers News .....	4
November's XC Action .....	5
Woking Apply Pressure but Stragglers Stand Firm .....	6
Straggler Men Dig Deep at Nork .....	7
London Championships at Parliament Hill: but where was the mud? .....	9
Introducing New Club Welfare Officers .....	11
Fulham 10k at last! .....	15
Future Races .....	19



## *Editorial*

As Straggler history stretches back to 1981, a great variety of interesting people have worn the famous yellow and black foot. Long-standing club members tell anecdotes of Stragglers who have moved on, and Stragmag is the ideal way to hear from ex-pats.

We learn recently that Robin Waterfield, a Straggler for several years until the mid-2000s, who now lives in Greece, has dedicated his latest book to both ourselves and his former Cornish club. Examining the ancient Olympics, he has sent us a short extract, which contains accounts of the odd practise of nude athletics.

The invitation is always there for others to reconnect with the Stragglers, letting us know of races and life adventures beyond the famous foot.

Elsewhere in this issue, the cross-country season sees the half way point in the Surrey League with a table-topping team for the ladies, and an individual Straggler leading the way in the individual men's competition.

As we reflect on what might surely be the driest race at Parliament Hill, we hear about the Fulham 10k, finally run after cancellation due to snow back in March.

Deadline for December's issue is Thursday 28th. As the final issue for 2018 comes after Christmas, see a list of forth-coming running and social festivities in the news section.

Thank you to all contributors and to Dave Griffiths for his editorial assistance.

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



# *Stragglers News*

Important fixture changes for ladies Surrey League. Due to unavailability of an organising club for the January 12th fixture, the schedule for the remaining races has been updated as follows:

Saturday February 9th: Richmond Park (Kingston end), hosts Kingston & Poly and Fulham

12 noon - U15/U17

12.30 - U13

1 pm – senior division 2

Saturday March 2nd: Lloyd Park hosts Croydon H, Striders of Croydon and SLH

11 am – senior division 2

12 noon - U15/U17

12.30 - U13

(Division 1 races are also taking place on these dates at the same venue)

Thursday 29th November sees the start of the 2018/2019 Handicap Series. We are trialling a new course which will see runners complete and out and back course on to and along Riverside Drive. A number of marshals will be in place on Thursday night to ensure participants follow the new route.

In an attempt to reduce waiting times on cold evening, the clock will start at 7:45 rather than 8pm.

Sunday December 9th is our turn to host the annual mob match with 26.2 (hurray!). The 4-mile run will begin at 10am, with registration at the Hawker Centre from 9. Refreshments will be available after the run.

We have lost out to 26.2 in the past couple of years, so please come and join us for what is always a very enjoyable social morning, and to attempt to win the mob and not ruin club captain Phil's Christmas again.

Monday 10th December is the date for the Little Feet Awards.

Following a short run from the Swan in Hampton Wick, a buffet will be available, and the awards presented – cost is £10.

All members welcome. If you wish to attend, please contact [littlefeet@stragglers.org](mailto:littlefeet@stragglers.org).

The Christmas pub crawl returns on Friday 21st December, location is Teddington.



The final list of pubs and estimated times at each will be sent out in Stragmail nearer the time, and shared on the club website and [social media](#), but we will begin in the Roebuck, 72 Hampton Road, Hampton Hill, TW12 1JN at 7pm. Other pubs to include Red Lion (Stanley Road), Masons Arms, Teddington Arms and the Builders.

And finally, the Cabbage Patch 4, that traditional Boxing Day leg-stretcher, is back. Race to start at 11am with the Cabbage Patch pub as race HQ. Entry is either a wrapped present to the value of £3, or the cash equivalent which will be donated to charity.



## *November's XC Action*

We've reached half way in the Surrey League and our ladies team sit top of the table as they bid for an immediate return to Division 1. The men, competing in division2 following promotion last season, sit 5th. Tim Haughian, in his debut Straggler XC season, leads the individual standings after two 2nd place finishes, has a Straggler ever won a Surrey League overall title before?

This month we also made our return to the London Championships, read reports below and an update on the current position in our Winter Grand Prix.

## *Woking Apply Pressure but Stragglers Stand Firm*

A close fought battle between ourselves and Woking at the front of the field produced a thoroughly exciting competition at Nonsuch Park, with supporters of both teams unsure as to who had actually won this one. The final published result showed Woking as the winners on count back. Their last scorer being over the line before our last scorer. Interestingly, using the Mob Match scoring method, the result would have showed in our favour.

Straggs	1, 3, 5, 7, 10. = 26
Woking	2, 4, 6, 8, 9. = 29

The other interesting fact from this result for Woking, shows and demonstrates how important a role their B team played in turning the result in favour of their A team who would have otherwise lost the match. They had two B team scorers in front of our final A team scorer, and without them the match result would have been 77 to 79 in our favour. Well worth remembering that your 100% effort further down the field, may feel like a lost cause to you but to the team – and team manager - that last vest that you take out may be the difference between winning or losing.

So, how would our A team have fared had they replicated their performance in the Division 1 match?

Sarah 16th Sophia 23rd Liz 54th Juliet 70th Dee 100th total points 263. This would have placed us in 14th position in the match and 13th of 16 A teams. Factor in our current strongest team on paper and we could easily finish amongst the top 5 teams in Division 1. So, looking ahead we have to be positive and ensure we maintain the momentum that will see promotion to Division 1 and then to be as strong and as confident as we possibly can in order to establish ourselves amongst the top teams in the league. It may seem a big ask, but if we start now to think ahead and look forward to the challenge, there is no reason why the Stragglers Ladies shouldn't be competing with and against the top clubs in the south of England next season.

Optimistic, maybe! Realistic yes!

We do remain top of the league, but it is important that all of you who performed so well in the first half of the season give the same effort and a little more in the remaining two races which are after Christmas. We were a little unlucky in the November fixture as we lost Sarah Winter at the last minute, having not fully recovered from her tremendous run in Frankfurt, and also Heidi hadn't quite recovered from a foot injury that she picked up in match1. It appears that Sophie lost a couple of places due to either a sleeping marshal or course direction not as obvious as it maybe should have been.

Sarah K put in a great captain's performance and showed again her desire and determination to be back at the front of the pack. Sophie settled well from her early disappointment supporting Sarah as the second scorer for Stragglers and a great run from Liz Killip secured her a third scorer position and 1st V55. Juliet Cleghorn and Dee Smale completed our scoring 5 with Juliet 1st V50 and Dee doing a great job in hanging on to that all important 5th position, especially as she was still recovering from a lingering cold.

The B team not to be out done put in their own outstanding performance finishing in 3rd place amongst the B teams and 14th of 44 A and B teams. Team positions were 48th Phyllis Flynn, 51st Alexis Prince, 58th Liz Fraser, 62nd Clare Graham, 134th Betsy Jones. With great support from 144th Mary Hyde, 147th Ramona Thevenet, 179th Julie Garner, 212th Sabine Duffy, 226th Mirella Genziani, 233rd Venessa Lok, 235th Lynda Chase, 239th Chrissie Glew, 251st Gail Caruana and 260th Helene Hill.

League standings after 2 matches - Straggs 122 - Woking 181 - FOT 195

Kev Best



## *Straggler Men Dig Deep at Nork*

Ahead of this fixture I was a little apprehensive as four of our scorers from the first race were not going to be available. However,

the club once again proved we have great strength in depth because we surpassed our 5th place at the first race by finishing in a superb 4th place overall.

The course was technically challenging, undulating but for the most part fairly firm underfoot. The conditions were mild but with the threat of a storm in air which hit us at the end of the race.

Tim Haughian once again led the team home with another brilliant 2nd place overall. Tim quite rightly heads the Surrey League division 2 individual rankings. Second Straggler man was recruit Andrew Keane with a fantastic Surrey League debut run for us. Both Jim Lurkins and Andrew Tugwell secured top 50 finishes. Paul Bowden and Richard Carter with only six seconds separating them were leading the charge behind. Next home was Charlie Jeffrey, his first scoring performance in the Surrey League as a senior. Only four seconds separated our last three scorers - Richard Baggott, Crispin Allen and Malcolm Davies. What a finish that was! It should be noted that Malcolm was the first v50 in the race over the line, another great run from Malcolm.

We should not forget the B team performance on the day who finished in a brilliant third place confirming the club really does have an abundance of quality cross country runners! The two Andrew's Wren and Hoseason set the standard followed by Gareth Pritchard and Stuart Hambling (despite a fall) making their first league appearances of the season. There was yet another exciting tight finish of only 5 seconds splitting Mark Pattinson, Steve Clelland and Jonathan Davies. Cross country stalwart Tiago Ramos was next home followed by club Chair Kevin Price. Completing the B team scorers was Steve Smith with another impressive run.



It was very pleasing that in total 28 Straggler men made the trip to Nork Park, it is great to see so many of us taking part in these races. There was also lots of fantastic vocal support round the course from Kev Best, Pam, Helene, Ramona (and others) basking in the success of the lady's team earlier in the day. Special mention too for Helen Davies for helping out with race number duties and a very special mention must go to Susan Howarth for

giving up her time to help marshal the race following a plea from the race organisers.

Simon Brazil



## *London Championships at Parliament Hill: but where was the mud?*

It's often said that "it never rains in Bushy Park at 9 am on a Saturday". Sure enough, the coldest, wettest Bushy parkrun I can remember was a non-Saturday Christmas Day one. Even more of a certainty is that Parliament Hill, that notorious cross-country course which to the new-comer sounds like the stuff of legend, or nightmares, is always a mud bath. In February this year, for my debut visit, the hype was definitely matched with reality, a slog up and down slippery, slidy hills, with standing water to be found at the bottom of many a tricky descent. The best bit, is that the Parliament Hill veterans would carelessly conclude after that, "this wasn't too bad for Parliament Hill", as if they'd just ran round Bushy parkrun in a heatwave.

Fast forward to November, and even with winter having not really started, many were still expecting this famous old XC course to defy recent weather conditions and be water-logged, but no, nothing, not a mud patch to be seen! The nearest was one patch which was a bit earthy. Those who had brought trail shoes (what they thought they'd need those for is a mystery) actually found they might actually be able to use them.

Donovan Duffy, first time men's team organiser, was rewarded with an excellent turnout of 17 runners. With the first 4 to score Straggs



were 21st out of 35 teams. Quickest around the 12km (ish) course was Jim Lurkins, followed to complete the scoring by Richard Carter, Crispin Allen and Charlie Jeffrey. Whilst at the other end of the Stragg-field, it was great to see Alan Mawdsley competing after a few injury-hit years.

The ladies were hit hard by injury and other unavailability, which meant Mary Hyde could cash in for Winter Grand

Prix points – you can only beat who you're against and those points count, where ever they're won.

If you're reading this thinking to run Parliament Hill without mud is cheating, fear not, we can be sure the Southern in January will be back to the course we've come to know so well. When I say fear not, I mean, have the fear, definitely have the fear.

After four fixtures, Mary Hyde leads the ladies Winter Grand Prix table with 110 points. She also leads the F35 category by 7 points from Sarah Kinsella, and also is the only competitor to have run in all four races so far.

Gail Caruana is third overall and leads the F55 category by 6 points over Liz Killip. 4th and 5th overall are separated by just 1 point, with Sophie Biggs leading f45 and Heidi Russenberger ahead in Senior Lady.

For the men, Charlie Jeffrey is the pace-setter having completed all four races. He leads the table and SM competition on 119 points, however both Jim Lurkins – 100 points from 3 races – and Tim Haughian – a maximum 70 points from 2 races – are breathing down his neck.

In recent years the M50 category has been the one to watch but after 4 races it's definitely M40 where the most exciting battles will be fought this season – 6 of the current top 10 are in this category. Pete Gregorouski leads on 97 points, with Richard Carter 2nd on 91, Crispin Allen 3rd on 86 and Donovan Duffy 4th on 85.

Our M50 leader is Malcolm Davies on 78 with his nearest challenger Mark Pattinson on 65.

Simon Webb



## *Introducing New Club Welfare Officers*

We are pleased to announce Phil Davies and Maddie Garner as your new welfare officers. They have been appointed to listen to any concerns that you may have, and act upon them accordingly. Concerns may relate to anything including verbal or emotional abuse, vulnerability, physical harm, potential risk of injury, neglect, safe guarding, trolling, etc....

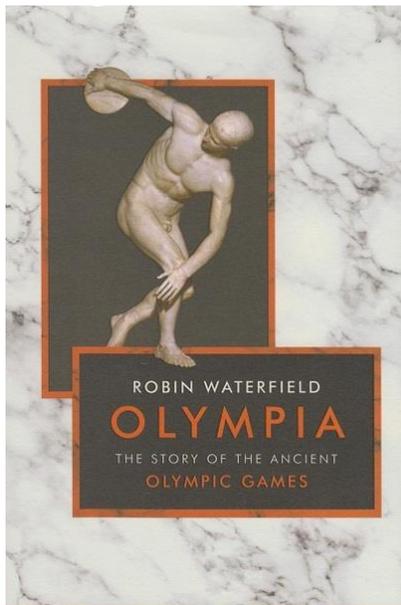
You can usually find Phil at the club on a Thursday night for a quiet chat or catch Maddie at one of the races. Email addresses for the welfare officers will be set up and publicised shortly, and, in due course, the club's welfare policies and procedures will be posted in the members area of the website.

Maddie and Phil are more than happy to have a phone chat or meet for a coffee.



## *Ancient Greek Athletes Ran Naked!*

As Stragglers with long memories will recall, I was a member of the club from 1994-2005. My running career is unfortunately now over, but in my day I was a middle-ability runner (e.g. half-marathon pb of 1.29) and a regular participant in the Green Belt Relay. Perhaps my greatest contribution to Stragglers history was to have been the first member to venture to South Africa for the Comrades Marathon in 2002 (a fiftieth birthday present to myself), stimulating many others to do likewise over succeeding years. Anyway, I have the fondest memories of the club, and I have dedicated my latest book to it (for the rest of my work, please see my website, [robinwaterfield.com](http://robinwaterfield.com)). The book is called *Olympia: The Story of the Ancient Olympic Games* (Head of Zeus, 2018), and it makes a perfect Christmas present. There are plenty of colour illustrations as well as illuminating text!



The Stragmag editor, Simon Webb, suggested that I provide an extract from the book. As a matter of fact, the appendix to the book, ‘The Legend of the Marathon Run’, was first published in the April 2004 Stragmag, so I haven’t repeated that. Here’s my take on one of the most peculiar aspects of the ancient Olympics – the fact that the participants competed in the nude. The only features of ancient Greek society that you need to know in advance are that all contestants at the ancient Olympics were male, and that admiration of the male body by other men was not considered weird or perverted in upper-class circles in

ancient Greece. I am not suggesting that Stragglers should adopt the practice of athletic nudity!

At many festivals, including Olympia, the athletes performed naked in the track-and-field and heavy events (boxing, wrestling, and pankration); they also exercised naked in the gymnasium. In equestrian events the riders usually wore clothes – not for reasons of modesty or comfort, but because the training they undertook did not

allow them to develop bodies worth showing off to the world. There was probably another reason too. The elite owners did not themselves ride the horses they entered; in the days before saddles and stirrups it was dangerous and uncomfortable, so, with very rare exceptions, they got slaves to do it for them – and to the Greek way of thinking no one would want to see a slave's naked body. The same went for chariot-racing with its attendant dangers.

Nudity was unique to Greek athletics and, within the Greek world, unique to athletics; elsewhere public nudity was a source of shame, not pride. Why, then, did the Greeks adopt this practice? Originally, athletes had worn loincloths, but these had fallen into disuse by the middle of the seventh century, when we have the earliest unambiguous evidence on a painted vase. The stories the Greeks told about why they practised naked athletics are plainly no more than guesses. Two of them, for instance, told of how a runner's loincloth accidentally fell off. In one version, the athlete found that he could run faster without it, but in the other the loose loincloth tripped him up; he died of his wounds, and the Olympic officials decreed that from then on all athletes should be unclothed. The Romans were on the whole more prudish than the Greeks, and it is unlikely that the naked Olympics survived the imposition of Roman rule on Greece in the second century BCE. Roman athletes wore a breech-cloth.

There are painted vases in existence, and literary accounts (albeit from people writing many centuries after the event), showing that some athletes tied their penises back against their bodies by means of a thong. The Greeks, for whom *kuōn* ('dog') was one of many slang words for the penis, called the thong a *kunodesmion* ('dog-leash'). But the reason for this practice is unclear. Scholars generally say that it would have lessened the discomfort of naked athletics, but this is questionable, at best. The penis is not the part of the male genitalia that needs securing for the sake of comfort.

Besides, it is not certain that athletes competed with their penises restrained in this way. Who would run with a tight leather thong around his waist? What wrestler would give an opponent a chance to lock his hand inside the thong? The purpose of the practice, which was not unique to athletes, might have been to symbolize sexual restraint, or to signal to admirers that their advances would not be welcome. Perhaps one of the purposes of nudity in general was to display one's self-control – to show that, even when surrounded by beautiful naked bodies, a man might not get aroused.

The principal aim of athletic nudity was to display a fine, well-muscled body, gleaming with olive-oil. The elite of Greece were, in the phrase coined in fifth-century Athens, ‘the beautiful and the good’, and the assumption that a fine exterior was a reflection of virtuous character was rarely questioned. The Olympic games were a summation of the aristocratic ideals of physical skill, beauty and strength, of competition, of publicly displayed piety and of honour freely or grudgingly given by one’s peers. The important point was that your adversaries were your peers. When Alexander the Great, who was apparently no mean sprinter, was asked if he would compete in the Olympics, he said: ‘Only if my rivals are kings.’

Nudity, tying back the penis and the application of olive oil were adopted for ritual and aesthetic purposes rather than practical and performance-enhancing ones. The underlying message was probably: ‘What you see is what you get. I am as I appear to be.’ Nudity might perhaps have acted as a leveller, since whatever class of society they come from all naked men are equal – but, as we have seen, for many decades after the introduction of nudity the gymnasia and the international games were monopolized by the rich. Aristotle even claims that athletic nudity was one of the ways in which the rich distinguished themselves from others. More critically, as was the case in the gymnasium, homoerotic overtones were also present in the stadium. In this respect, the Olympic games were gymnasia expanded onto an international stage.

Robin Waterfield



## *Fulham 10k at last!*

After a wait of exactly eight months, I finally got to run the inaugural Fulham 10k amongst a field of over four thousand participants. This new event was originally planned for Sunday 18th March but owing to the crazy and cold, wintry weather conditions that weekend, the event was postponed due to severe snow. Being part of the new Adidas City Runs, this should have been the start of the four runs for 2018 but instead it was the last, but they always save the best until then!

It began in June with the first ever 1Hour run starting with the majestic St Paul's Cathedral in the background, then a flat Clapham 10k in September, followed by the vibrant Shoreditch 10k in October to the finale of the fast and flattest roads of Fulham in November. All of the events are run on the luxury of closed roads, which reflect the pricey entry, but you also get a free tech t-shirt (to wear on the day with your bib number on it!), a chunky medal, free event photos to download, various goodies at the finish and apparently there were bespoke training sessions on offer too, which obviously I didn't take on!

It was a glorious morning and the conditions for organised running my first since the Cabbage Patch 10. extremely good obviously the and once I was at Common, (easily



Common, (easily Fulham Broadway tube station) it was lovely to see familiar faces amongst the vast number of runners and how bizarre as we were all wearing the same black tops! I met up with my friends and fellow Stragglers and between us there wasn't any yellow to be seen, the only colour amongst us was the wonderful glow of Ann's suntan after her recent jaunt to Club La Santa!

sunny November perfect cool taking part at an event and it was rather damp It had an feel about it, sunshine helped Eel Brook reached by

At the common the facilities were plentiful with rows of toilets, coffee huts, bag drops and lots of loud speaker announcements, so everyone knew exactly what was going on. The race itself began at a respectable time of 9.30 am and the runners were sent off in pre-

allocated waves of five-minute intervals. It was somewhat exciting to hear that GB Triathlete Alistair Brownlee was there to see us all off but as I passed the start line, he was busy checking his phone! I was in wave D but it was a rather slow start and thankfully for me I overtook the 75-minute pacer as I was really hoping to finish in under an hour.

Starting on the iconic New Kings Road, the route took us on an unforgettable journey through one of London's most prestigious postcodes on the flat and open roads. There were lots of supporters en-route with charity cheerers, marvellous musicians and lots of locals too. We continued through the picturesque Parsons Green and down to the bustling Fulham Road - the route even included a loop around the famous home to Chelsea FC, Stamford Bridge stadium. The route certainly showcased the very best of this fabulous part of the capital.



For me personally, I loved every step. I had a great run and my often-annoying hamstring didn't bother me on this occasion, also my finish time was just under the hour which I was really pleased with. As for the rest of my lovely parkrun pals, Wendy had a great comeback run as a few months ago she was hobbling about on crutches and her husband Duncan seemed to have a remarkable run too.

Ann loved the experience and managed the whole course without walking and finished in an impressive time and Carol (who formerly hated running,

aka Cupcake Carol) managed to run around the course without even trying and smashed out a new PB!

Afterwards, in the Event Village carpeted with Autumn leaves, we were greeted by my husband Dave, who came to cheer us over the finish line, and he refuelled us from his rucksack with fizz! Whilst we sipped our pink Prosecco, the rest of the runners soaked up the post run vibes in the park and there were even free recovery massages and yoga available too.



Subsequently, we headed off for the perfect recovery in the form of coffee, cake, chortles and chat!



Thanks for having us Fulham, you were fabulous!

Julie Papworth





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## *Future Races*

Please note alteration to ladies Surrey League XC dates

### **December:**

Saturday December 8<sup>th</sup>: Southern Masters XC Championships, venue Horspath, Oxford – Malcolm Davies

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>: Mob Match v 26.2, Hawker Centre (Phil Davies)

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>: South of the Thames 7.5 Miles, Beckenham – Jon Parry/Helene Hill

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>: Cabbage Patch 4, Twickenham – our tradition festive race (Keith Haworth)

### **January 2019:**

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>: Middlesex XC Championships, Perivale – Simon Brazil/Helene Hill

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>: Surrey XC Championships, Lloyd Park – Simon Brazil/Helene Hill

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>: Men's Surrey League Fixture 3, Mitcham – Simon Brazil

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>: Southern XC Championships, venue TBC – Simon Brazil/Helene Hill

### **February:**

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>: Ladies' Surrey League Fixture 3, Richmond Park – Helene Hill

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>: Men's Surrey League Fixture 4, Croydon – Simon Brazil

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>: National XC, Harewood House Leeds – Simon Webb

### **March:**

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ladies Surrey League Fixture 4, Lloyd Park – Helene Hill

Sat 30: Ellis Cup/Dysart Trophy, Richmond Park

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