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Issue 361



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Editorial

Reflecting on 2019 it's difficult to know where to start. In truth it's also difficult to know where to stop as we have had another varied, vibrant, successful and enjoyable twelve months. For fear of missing important people and achievements out, I shall limit this to just a few.

Stragglers have been represented brilliantly in cross country races. Our men secured an impressive 4th place in Surrey League division 2 on their return in 2018/2019, and are fighting hard to retain this status. Our women bounced straight back to the top league and are proving that we have some of the best female runners around as we sit mid-table after two fixtures. Great work managing these teams by Simon Brazil, Kev Best and Helene Hill, supported by a cast of many throughout the year.

Success came too at our own Green Belt Relay with the Straggler Vets taking home the Walking Stick and in doing so, winning a category prize for the first time since the early years of the race in the mid-90s. Green Belt was yet another remarkable weekend for our club, magnificently organised by Peter and Alex with yet another cast of many helping them deliver one of the best weekends of running and teamwork we could wish for. GBR is now one of four Straggler organised races, as one of the biggest events for the club in 2019 was taking over the organisation of the Cabbage Patch 10. Spearheaded by club chair Kevin Price and Race Director Peter Wedderburn, this has proved to be both a significant challenge but also huge achievement. The good-will towards the Stragglers was at times quite overwhelming.

River Relay and the Wedding Day 7k are our other two events, both of which require considerable volunteer efforts from such key figures within our club as Peters Wedderburn and Kennedy, Simon Brazil, Keith Haworth and Mark Thomas, with Jon Parry looking after our own teams in the River Relay.

All four events donate a considerable amount to charity, something we are extremely proud of. Just before Christmas Stragglers donated £2760 to the Richmond Young Carers from the proceeds of the Wedding Day race. Keith Haworth and Mark Thomas recently visited to hand over the cheque and there is a letter of appreciation

from the charity in this issue and it is well worth reading. We also donated money raised at the Cabbage Patch 4 on Boxing Day to this cause. The Cabbage Patch 10 generated £10,000 to our three chosen charities, MDS UK, Clarendon School and the Princess Alice Hospice.

There were countless personal achievements throughout the club, from juniors making their mark in Surrey League competition, through to a number of vet athletes competing on the international stage in road races, cycling and triathlon.

The year has not been without it's tricky points. We're very aware that Thursday nights at the Hawker have taken yet another backwards step in 2019, and the Stragglers committee are discussing ways to address this every time we meet. We were encouraged however by the atmosphere and numbers at the recent London Marathon draw and 5k handicap evening, which gave a glimpse of what can still be possible. The social side of the club has however benefited from investment in places in races (such as the Hogsback which you can read about in this issue) and mob match refreshments. We will continue to experiment with ways to build on the social side of the club and are always open to ideas and offers of organisation from members.

We're excited about the opportunities which lie ahead in 2020. Stragmag is one of a number of ways these will be reflected, do keep an eye out for Stragmail which is sent to members who have requested it, every other Wednesday. The first for 2020 goes out on January 8th at 12pm. You may (or not) have noticed Stragmag has drifted from being a monthly publication. It is becoming harder to maintain this, although we do feel it is an important record and archive of club activity. Contributions are always welcome, race reports and other stories can be sent to stragmag@stragglers.org at anytime. In 2019 we covered Comrades in South Africa, the Ben Nevis Ultra and the Three Peaks, as well as regular races more familiar to the Straggler calendar. Dave Griffiths provides excellent support with photos and copy editing.

The next issue will be available early March, by which time the Surrey League season will have concluded and we will hopefully reflect on a continuation to a strong start for both our teams.

Simon Webb Stragmag@stragglers.org

Stragglers News

Very well done to Sarah Kinsella who came 18th overall (representing Surrey) in The South of England intercounties cross country (Saturday December 7th). She was also the first scorer for the Surrey B team. Excellent running and great to have a Straggler representing the county.

Meanwhile on the same day at the Southern Masters Cross country in Oxford, Sophie Biggs was 3rd V45 and our V40 ladies finished in 2nd place with silver consisting of Sarah Winter, Sophie Biggs and Karen Levene.

40 Stragglers took on the famous non-specific distance of the Hogsback road race on December 8th. First Straggler man was Pete Gregorowski with Liz Fraser first woman. We also have a number of age category prizes: Deane Morley first VM55, Phyllis Flynn first VW55, June Hall first VW60, Malcolm Fletcher first VM60. Full results after a race report in this issue.



Our traditional pre-Christmas meeting with 26.2 went with recent form. Whilst 26.2 convincingly won the mob 162 to 82, but with 67 runners per side scoring, and based on performance, Stragglers take the match - so everyone's a winner!

We've enjoyed another great festive period in the club, with excellent attendances at our pub crawl organised by Nick Brown, Cabbage Patch 4 (with thanks to Keith Haworth and family, Simon Brazil and the staff at the Cabbage Patch) and our New Year's Day run in Richmond Park led by Phil Davies – some of us stayed in the Park Tavern until 6pm. You may also have noticed the magnificent numbers at parkrun, especially at Bushy on Christmas Day with 2545 lining up. What a great part of Christmas this has become.

Tuesday night speedwork moves to Nightingale Lane for the month of January, with a 7:45pm start.

And with the opening of Up and Running Teddington, this is now your retail choice for Stragglers kit.

Surrey League Round Up

At the halfway stage and after two fixtures in the Surrey League cross country season, our women sit 7th in division 1 on 390, just 18 points behind Hercules Wimbledon in 6th (372) and 20 points behind 5th place Herne Hill (370). South London on 494 and Ranelagh on 501 are the closest challenges to Straggs.

Sarah Kinsella is 4th in the F35 category with Lynda Chase 5th in the 60+ competition.

It's tight too in Men's division 2. Stragglers sit 6th out of 9, with two to be relegated. We're 73 points behind Woking who sit 5th, and 129 points ahead of Striders of Croydon. Crucially Wimbledon Windmilers, who occupy the first of two relegation places, are on 1148 points, but in an XC race, these are gaps which can be closed and the Chobham fixture has real significance.

Charlie Jeffrey is currently the leading under 20 in the division, with Crispin Allen third M50 and Malcom Fletcher fifth M60.



Winter Grand Prix: Hogs Back Race December 2019

In 2019 we added a couple of road races to the Winter Grand Prix, a series of races usually exclusively cross country, with the aim of broadening participation in the club's internal winter competition. Here Phil Davies writes about the race which has been a long-standing fixture but visited less frequently by Stragglers in recent years.



Early Wintery sunshine broke through the clouds as we queued awaiting entrance to the car park. The “car park” was actually on grass at the side of an access track to Loseley House and, for some, would prove to be difficult to drive out from after the race. 40 Stragglers, mainly with free club places, lined up along cognoscenti from other

local clubs. Indeed, we could have used this as a mob match with 26.2RRC and beaten their 36 runners by a whisker. Perhaps one for next year?

The Hogsback is the name given to the ridge along which the A31 rises as it approaches Guildford, and the new race route profile is now the image of a Hogs back too. We set off on a gentle downward slope, fully aware that going down only increased the uphill sections. One bystander shouted the encouraging words “great conditions for running and not too muddy”. This puzzled me because when I last ran this race, alarmingly 10 years ago, the route then was entirely on road. I had wondered where the reduced mileage from 8 miles to 11.4km would be made and I soon found out. Rather than 2miles to the first hill, we started our first ascent within the first mile and brutal it was too. We had hardly had time to warm up!

The route then descended through the outskirts of Guildford before rising again towards the A3/A31 intersection. This is where we encountered the trail section of the race and very nice it was too. We skirted round a few of the larger puddles to keep our trainers reasonably dry before a very pleasant descent into sleepy Compton.

The latter stages of this race are thankfully much easier than the earlier ones. One last minor hill on a narrow country lane, not the steep road into Loseley that I had expected, and a dash along a straight tree lined track to the finish.

My aim was to be as far into the race as I could before my nemesis, Andrew Allen, thundered past me. I was pleased to make it to 10km, even more so to make it to 11km and elated to finish in front of him for a change. This “private” challenge helped motivate me to a much better time than I had dared to hope for. Thank you Andrew.

Almost perfect running conditions and team spirit produced some good individual results. The Stragglers may not have triumphed in either Mens or Ladies team prizes, if there were any, but check out

the below table for the many “podium” category finishes especially those of Dean Morley, Phyllis “Evergreen” Flynn, Malcolm Fletcher and June Hall, who were all fastest in their categories.



Even if the inducement of free places isn't available next year I think many of those running this year will want to return.

Phil Davies

Club Captain



Thank you from Richmond Carers Centre - Young Carers Service to The Stragglers

Please see below a thank you letter from the Richmond Young Carers Support Team Leader regarding our donation of £2,760.00 to the charity from the Wedding Day Race proceeds.



11 December 2019

To all the members of The Stragglers,

Richmond Carers Centre – Young Carers Service would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks for your support and extremely generous donation of £2,760.00.

It is an amazing amount that you have raised and we are very grateful for your generosity. It will make such a difference to the 457 young carers currently registered with Richmond Carers Centre.

This significant amount that you have raised for our charity will be able to help deliver services for our young carers over the next 2 years. It is a significant amount, and it will enable us to run additional holiday leisure break activities for the young carers over the next 2 years. These are extremely important to young carers and it gives them an opportunity to have a break from their caring role, and it allows them to do something fun and positive, and meet other young carers.

By fundraising and supporting Richmond Carers Centre, it has helped to raise awareness of young carers and how as a vulnerable group they require emotional support, and valuable services such as the holiday leisure break programme and after school groups and activities during term time.

From all the young carers and staff at Richmond Carers Centre, we cannot thank you enough for your generosity and kindness. We are overwhelmed with the amount of your donation, it will transform our services for young carers over the next 2 years

Yours sincerely

Sophie Richardson
Young Carers Support Team Leader

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Keith
Haworth and
Mark
Thomas
went along
to one of
their
sessions to present the cheque.



Future Races

January

- Saturday 11 Surrey League XC fixture 3 – Women Wimbledon Common, Men Chobham Common

February

- Saturday 8 – Surrey League XC fixture 4 – Women Richmond Park, Men Lloyd Park
- Sunday 16: Valentines 10k

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