

SEAFORD STRIDERS

We don't just run, we also have fun!



By Bronwyn Ryan

March and April have been busy months for the Seaford Striders with members taking part in the Brighton Marathon, Martello Half, London Marathon, Mid Sussex Marathon Weekend and the Seaford 10k to name a few.

Members have seen their gruelling winter training pay off with huge PB's and wonderful achievements all round. The Striders spirit has been out in full force with members supporting and encouraging one another.

In this edition we have 18 confirmed events for the Club Grand Prix. This year there are a number of parkruns included so get the dates in the diary, organise your car shares and get ready to enjoy the events.

If you would like to submit an article to be published in the next newsletter please send it through to Bronwyn Ryan on bronwyn.2009@hotmail.co.uk. We would love to hear from all of our members about the races you've taken part in, the volunteering you've done at Parkrun, your favourite Wednesday night run and everything in between.

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SUSSEX GRAND PRIX 2023

SUSSEX GRAND PRIX

The Sussex Grand Prix is back for 2023!!! It consists of taking part in road races organised around Sussex throughout the year with points awarded based on each individual's finishing position. There are 12 races in total and only your top 6 scores will count (individual scoring). There are also two club leagues which are scored differently.

Event	Dates	Event
1	26th March 2023	Hastings Half
2	30th April 2023	Haywards Heath 10 mile
3	7th May 2023	Rye 10 mile
4	14th May 2023	Horsham 10k
5	4th June 2023	Hastings 5 mile
6	18th June 2023	Heathfield 10k
7	2nd July 2023	Bewl 15
8	12th July 2023	Phoenix 10k
9	10th September 2023	Hellingly 10k
10	1st October 2023	Lewes Downland 10 mile
11	15th October 2023	Hove Prom 10k
12	19th November 2023	Crowborough 10k

If you have any questions about the Sussex Grand Prix and how it works please reach out to Ollie Sprague who will assist you.



CLUB GRAND PRIX

Event	Dates	Event
1	26th March 2023	Hastings Half
2	2nd April 2023	Brighton Marathon
3	16th April 2023	Martello Half
4	30th April 2023	Haywards Heath 10
5	14th May 2023	Seaford 10k
6	20th May 2023	Peacehaven Parkrun
7	4th June 2023	Hastings 5
8	10th June 2023	Preston Park Parkrun
9	24th June 2023	Brighton & Hove Parkrun
10	15th July 2023	Hove Prom Parkrun
11	29th July 2023	Seaford Beach Parkrun
12	12th August 2023	Bevendean Parkrun
13	17th September 2023	Hellingly 10k
14	15th October	Great South Run
15	4th November	Brighton & Hove Parkrun
16	19th November	Crowborough 10k
17	December	Mince Pie 10
18	9th December	East Brighton Parkrun

What is the Club Grand Prix?

The Club Grand Prix is a fun and friendly competition amongst other club members running throughout the calendar year.

Who is the Club Grand Prix for?

The Club Grand Prix is for anyone who would like to be involved. Speed does not matter!

Who can I contact about the Club Grand Prix?

If you have any questions on the CGP please reach out to Ollie Sprague who will be able to help you.



Current Female Leader - Jemma Crawford and Current Male Leader - Ollie Sprague

Meet the Committee Leanne Pearce – Membership Secretary

Hello, I'm Leanne. I joined Seaford Striders in 2019 having been someone that usually ran on my own plugged into my headphones and joining Striders was definitely a great choice. I found running with others so much more enjoyable and motivating than running on my own and it was great to learn some new routes too.

I'm not one to generally take part in races or events, save for the odd parkrun when I'm not volunteering, but I did join Nick and the team for the South Downs Way 100 Relay last year which was a brilliant day out.

I joined the Committee as Membership Secretary in 2021. I deal with new memberships throughout the year, membership renewals and registration of any affiliated members with England Athletics.

England Athletics is part of UK Athletics (UKA) and registration is only available via affiliated running or athletics clubs.

Registering is optional but it offers benefits such as entry discounts on licenced road and cross county events, entry to events exclusively available to registered athletes, discounts from selected retailers and exclusive registered athlete offers. In addition to the discounts available, registration with England Athletics also gives you access to a number of support services as well as qualification and development opportunities.

If you have already renewed your membership with Seaford Striders for this year without the UKA affiliation it's not too late to change the type of membership you have. If you do now wish to include the UKA affiliation in your membership then just e-mail membership@seafordstriders.org.uk and I can send you a payment request for the additional membership fee. The England Athletics UKA registration fee for 2023/24 is £17.00.



Outside of Striders I am currently working remotely in Barbados making the most of the sunshine and beaches once I clock off for the day. I try and keep up my running whilst I'm here but have found that it's much harder in this heat than it is running back in Seaford but it's something I'm willing to struggle with! I do come back home every few months and when I am back I do enjoy running with my fellow Striders again. I also return to my regular Seaford Beach parkrun volunteer duties when I come home where it's great to catch up with other Striders that I don't get to see on Wednesday evenings.

If you have any membership queries please e-mail me at membership@seafordstriders.org.uk

CROSS COUNTRY

The East Sussex Sunday Cross Country League came to an end in March at the final round in Pett.

It unfortunately clashed with The Moyleman Marathon which meant a few runners could not participate. However, 12 striders made the journey east to run at Pett, and because Lewes were hosting the marathon we got some good results to boost our team score and also everyone's individual scores too.

As a team on the day we finished 6th, and overall in the league we were 7th out of 18 teams. Well done to everyone who ran the cross country events this year, you all played your part.

Final individual league positions for everyone are below with races run in brackets. A big congratulations to podium (and Tempo voucher) winners Dave Dunstall & Peter Weeks in their age categories and Ray Smith who ran every race this season.



SM - Josh Nisbett 6th (4) SM - Ollie Sprague 15th (3)
SM - Rowan Tulley 16th (3) M35 - Colin Browne 25th (2)
M35 - Phill Stevenson 32nd (1) M40 - Nick Farley 27th (2)
M40 - Robin Warwick 42nd (2) M45 - Russ Hewlett 16th (5)
M45 - Steve Sprague 28th (2) M50 - James Marron 4th (5)
M50 - Jeff Young 11th (4) M50 - Ray Smith 18th (6)
M50 - Martyn Craddock 65th (1) M55 - Darren Evans 16th (5)
M55 - Richard Preece 33rd (2) M55 - Ron Van Heuvelen 40th (2)
M60 - Dave Dunstall 1st (4) M70 - Peter Weeks 3rd (5)
SW - Anneka Redley-Cook 7th (4) SW - Bronwyn Ryan 32nd (2)
SW - Jazz Dymott 39th (1) F35 - Jemma Crawford 8th (4)
F35 - Stacey Pollard 15th (2) F45 - Katherine Simmons 22nd (2)
F45 - Zingy Thetho 46th (1) F45 - Jo Robinson 47th (1)
F50 - Sam Alvarez 14th (5) F55 - Jackie Baxter 10th (4)
F60 - Beverly Sheridan 10th (5)

COUCH TO REPRESENTING SUSSEX

By Richard Impey

In early March, I had the opportunity to represent the club and county in the Inter-Counties competition held within the Essex 20-mile race. My journey to that point has not been straightforward though, requiring a lot of hard work, dedication and support from my fellow Seaford Striders!

I didn't start running until mid-2020 when I was bored during Covid lockdowns and needed an excuse to get out. I hadn't done much physical activity since leaving school apart from occasionally lifting weights at the gym. After seeing videos of ultrarunners on YouTube, I was inspired and started jogging a couple of times a week in the fields behind my house. I wasn't very good and couldn't run for more than 2 minutes before being desperately out of breath. Nevertheless, I stuck to it and completed the Couch 2 5k plan before setting myself the goal of running a half marathon. I found a training plan online and followed it diligently and in February 2021 I ran a half marathon around Peacehaven in just under 2 hours. It was (and still is) the hardest thing I have ever done, the sense of accomplishment was massive, and I was hooked on running.

One month later I stupidly did my first and only marathon. I hadn't trained for it and was nowhere near ready. I literally woke up one morning, saw the sun shining and thought sod it, I'm going to run a marathon today. My only plan was to stop and walk whenever my heart rate got too high, I didn't even take any food or water with me. I headed off over the Downs but by just over halfway I was in big trouble. My legs were knackered, but I was too far from home to stop and determined to get it done. I pushed on and finished in over 5 hours but was left with an annoying knee/IT band injury that lingered for a long time.



I was still able to run but every time I tried to increase my mileage my knee would lock up. It left me unable to make the progress I wanted as I had to carefully manage my running volume. In the middle of 2021, I joined Seaford Striders to help improve my running. Due to work patterns, I could barely make it to any races or the club's dedicated run nights but enjoyed taking part in its virtual Club Grand Prix events. It wasn't until regularly attending track and Wednesday night club runs in late 2021 that I began to see real improvement.

In December 2021 I achieved my first big running goal, a sub-20-minute 5k with the support of Ollie S and his expert pacing. Using a combination of running and cross-training because of my knee problem, I trained hard for and ran a sub-90-minute half marathon in February 2022. I ran the whole race with Rowan T and he gave me incredible support throughout, pretty much dragging me over the line. I took a break after this race before setting my sights on my next goal, a sub-40-minute 10k.

The break gave me a much-needed chance to heal. I ran in some of the Sussex/Club GP races over the following months, and the awesome Mid Sussex Marathon weekend with loads of other amazing Striders. Finally, after a consistent block of training, I achieved my 10k goal at the Phoenix 10k in July. Afterwards, someone asked me what my next goal was. As a joke, I said I only needed to run a marathon in under 3 hours now and I could retire from running. I was serious though; I just didn't have any idea how to go about doing it. I knew it would require a lot more commitment, and I started seeking out the knowledge and advice of other esteemed Striders.

In September I started a new job after 14+ years which allowed me to train more than ever. Around this time, I started doing training sessions on Saturday mornings set by Coach Phill of track fame. After weeks of me badgering him for more workouts during the week, he asked if I wanted to be coached by him with a spring marathon (Manchester) in mind. Phill is a top bloke and a phenomenal runner with great knowledge so I figured I'd be an idiot to refuse.

Since we've been working together my progress has gone through the roof. The training prescribed over this period has been extremely challenging, both mentally and physically. Each run I complete during the week is planned by Phill with either target distance, time or effort prescribed and as someone who overthinks everything this suits me perfectly. The polarized training prescribed has been difficult to say the least! I've been required to complete 2-3 speed workouts and a long run each week though I do make sure my easy runs are really easy! At times I have thought he is trying to kill or injure me but, I have only missed 1-2 runs in the time working together and rarely fail to complete workouts. When someone is willing to put in the effort to help you reach your goals there is an added motivation to ensure you don't take shortcuts or drop out when the going gets tough! That has helped me get through tough workouts and runs in all weathers at stupid times of the day (23 miles after work on a Sunday night anyone?).

Over this period, I have learnt so much about training, physiology, and more. I have built from running 40 mpw to over 70 mpw, which seemed impossible before. Significant PBs at most race distances have been achieved as well with more to follow hopefully. Most recently, I ran the Brighton Half Marathon in 79:28, 10 minutes faster than last year's race. This progress didn't go unnoticed and shortly after that race, I received a text informing me I had been selected to represent Sussex in the upcoming Inter Counties match held within the Essex 20-mile race.

Representing your county is a prestigious honour usually afforded only to the county's best, something I certainly don't consider myself to be! The other guys on the team were much faster than me (all 72-74-minute half marathoners) and this was the first time they were selected to represent Sussex as well. As a relatively inexperienced runner, I had a bit of impostor syndrome and I wasn't sure if I wanted the extra responsibility in the hardest run of the entire marathon block. However, I decided that the opportunity was too good to turn down as I may not get the chance to do so again. Representing your county is a prestigious honour usually afforded only to the county's best, something I certainly don't consider myself to be!



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Race day itself was uneventful, we set off from Burgess Hill very early which was a good decision, making up time lost to suspect navigation and enabling us to beat the toilet queues! We were greeted with bitterly cold temperatures and a decent breeze upon arrival. After a brief warm-up, we collected our Sussex vests and lined up for the customary team photo before heading to the start line. The race was kind of boring, 5 4-mile laps of a disused airfield with very few spectators. On a more positive note though, it was flat and fast! Within this race, the Inter-Counties match was held with 6 counties each bringing 2 teams of 4 men and 4 women. Each county's team's positions were determined by the cumulative times of their first 3 finishers with the top 3 counties on the men's and women's sides winning medals.

With only 350ish runners, it became spread out very early on but that didn't bother me as I had done most of my training runs alone and had a set pace to stick to. I was consistent throughout, though I had to stop at mile 15 to tie a lace that had come undone costing me around 40 seconds. I finished the 20 miles in 2:07:32 averaging 6:22 per mile, whilst feeling very comfortable throughout!

I was delighted with the run, how it felt and where it leaves me in the build-up to the Manchester marathon. I was also buzzing not to finish last out of all the county runners, finishing 19/20 xD! Big shout out to Coach Phill as well, he wasn't running for the team but was a big part of it, running a very impressive and comfortable looking 2:13:54 in between driving us all to and from the venue!

Our team finished 4th overall just outside the medals with the Sussex ladies taking 3rd overall in their respective match, a great performance from them enabling Sussex to keep up its streak of winning medals in each iteration of this event. Overall, I may have been slightly out of my depth, but it was a great experience and an honour to represent Sussex and Seaford Striders in a competitive team-based race.

Most of all, I'm extremely grateful for all the support received by fellow Striders and their willingness to share their knowledge and experiences throughout this journey.

The 2023 Seaford 10k

STRIDERS SUCCESS AT THE 10K

Over 40 Seaford Striders turned up in force at the Inaugural Seaford 10k race on Sunday 14th May. The conditions were virtually perfect - little to no wind made the seafront calm and with the temperature clocking around 13 degrees it was definitely the day with lots of opportunity to run a personal best.



After collecting race numbers and gathering for the important club photograph the runners made their way to the start line just beyond the Martello Tower.

At 9:30am the race began with runners heading along the virtually flat promenade towards the start of Seaford Beach Parkrun to Tide Mills Car Park before going to the Newhaven end of the Ouse Estuary where they turned and headed back towards the Martello Tower for the finish line.

Striders who were not running in the event were out in full force on the course cheering on the runners and providing true Strider support and encouragement to everyone taking part.

After just 33 minutes and a few seconds the first runner, Kenta Matsumoto, crossed the finish line before our very own Ollie Sprague crossed in 2nd place in a time of 34:30 followed closely by Ed Plager in 3rd place in a time of 34:38. The first Strider lady home was Samantha Alvarez in 50:32.

Other Striders to complete the race were: Nick Farley (37:37), Matt Clare (41:07), Steve Sprague (41:29), Ralph Jennings (42:06), James Dopson (42:13), Ray Smith (43:26), Fabian Eason (43:26), James Haybyrne (45:00), Chirag Patel (46:04), Martin Robards (48:25), Dan Axson (48:53), Kathryn Warren (50:38), Katherine Simmons (52:39), Les Mayger (52:59), Kate Aust (53:09), Martyn Craddock (55:28), Sue Curtis (55:41), Leanne Litster (56:36), Michelle Varndell (56:39), Kat Chamberlain (56:46), Gavin Wright (57:07), Steven Teale (57:31), Amanda Peters (59:49), Wendy Woodford (1:04:51), Jill New (1:04:54), Debbie Priest (1:05:33), Wendy Fortune (1:06:4), Kay Crush (1:07:46), Gary New (1:09:20), Sally Mayger (1:09:28), Jo Robinson (1:09:43), Sandra Standen (1:11:26), Sara Baitup (1:12:00), Sharon Plank (1:12:43), Becky Page (1:12:53), Jeanette Wells (1:14:29), Gillian Morgan (1:16:28), Margaret Osborne (1:18:31) and Phil Baker (1:19:27).



Brighton Marathon – New Route vs Old Route

By Sarah Hoyle

Having ran the Brighton Marathon twice before, I was intrigued to find out what the new course would be like and how well the new race organisers, London Marathon Events, did with taking over the event. Beforehand, in my head, I had decided that psychologically the course would be easier for those who had previously run the old route, but I was very wrong.

The Start

Last year, we had to drop our bags the day before when we collected our numbers which was a bit of a faff, but not only were our numbers posted to us this year, but we had bag drop back too – hurrah! There were more than 18 Striders running the Marathon this year, and I think that is testament to what a supportive running club we are that people feel able to try new challenges and improve their running. We all met for our obligatory pre-race group photo, and off to the start we went. Taking advantage of the last chance loos (I'm a big fan!) we were off. This year I had the privilege of running with Tristan who has run every single Brighton Marathon since it began so I was with a pro.

Miles 1-3

The old course went once around Preston Park before heading into town, however this year, we went most of the way around the park before turning right and up to Patcham/Withdean Park and back again. I liked this bit (spoiler – this was the only part of the new route that I DID approve of). It was a good out and back which meant we could spot and cheer fellow runners going the other way. It also allowed runners to spread out, settle into a pace and it was nice and flat. A good start.



Miles 3-7

This was the same as the old course more or less, making our way into town, past the Pavillion, around the Old Steine, before going north again to Elm Grove and back down again. I have to confess, I had forgotten the very steep hill at the top here, however we took the opportunity to walk up it so that Tristan could re-pin his number that had come loose.

The crowds around town were fabulous as they always are. We loved seeing all the handmade signs and rated the best ones. The winner was "You're running better than the government".

Miles 7-11

Mile 7-8 was up St James Street, before turning right and then right again so we went back on ourselves back to the pier roundabout before coming east again, running all the way to Ovingdean. This was the same as last year, but for some reason felt a lot harder. I had heard people talk about the famous "camber" of the Brighton Marathon but I had never really noticed it before, until now! By the time we were nearly at Ovingdean, my left hip was very sore from compensating on a very uneven road surface. Thankfully by the time we got up to Blind Veterans we were greeted with an AMAZING support crew of Striders. It really made all the difference. I have also discovered that whenever Tristan sees supporters up ahead, he speeds up, leaving me for dust!

Mile 12-16

Off we went into Ovingdean, before coming back and then up the hill towards Rottingdean, seeing Striders supporters again, before coming back down and seeing Striders supporters again – It was definitely the best part of the race. I had been looking forward to the nice long downhill all the way to the pier, but the downhill did not feel like downhill and my legs were really heavy at this point. Everything felt very hard. Now the finish had been moved away from the Marina, the course took a slightly different path down Dukes Mound and along the bottom before heading past the pier and onto the seafront. The crowds once more were fab, although many were holding trays of something I thought were jelly babies. Only when I looked closer did I see they were eating chips – it felt like such a cruel trick to be eating them whilst cheering us on.

Mile 17

Mile 17 has a chapter all of its own. It was not my favourite mile. Not only had they added in that stupid cul de sac (the same one that has been recently added to the Brighton Half), which I hate as you just lose such momentum, but you also had to run past Hove Lawns – AKA the finish! Luckily just after this as we turned into Grand Avenue we saw Russ and Sam cheering us on and that was a welcome boost because I really was feeling grumpy at this stage.

Mile 18-22

Now, in the old course, these miles are out towards the Shoreham Power Station. The organisers have apparently removed this section because everyone hated it, however these miles in a race are horrific regardless of where they are. The Hove section was horrific. There were plenty of crowds, but the vibe felt different, like they were having their own party and we were intruding. Not even a high five from Richard Impey at the Mile 18 marker could spur me on. Not only did it feel never ending, but they had added in two little loops, including one around the outside of Wish Park which again made us lose momentum and just contributed to the neverending feeling of doom. Give me Shoreham Power Station any day! It was so bad, at one point Tristan remarked "if it stays like this, I will have to seriously consider if I will ever run this again". I'm glad it wasn't just me.

Mile 23-24

After Hove, we turned west and ran up towards the lagoon. Now in the Half Marathon, you know that you turn here, however it felt like such a cruel trick when I realised the route was taking us out to Portslade by Sea. It literally took us half way to the power station anyway, so they may well have sent us the whole way there. In the old route, Miles 21-26 were running for home in the direction of the finish, so to be running this far into the marathon but in the opposite direction felt wrong to me. I think other runners felt it too as it was very quiet!

Mile 24-26.2

This section was Portslade to Hove Lawns. Whilst I was relieved that the final stretch was shorter, it definitely wasn't as good as the old course. Last year, you were running on wide roads, with the crowds all cheering you on. This year, we were on narrower paths, with people wandering about walking their dogs and having their cups of tea in the sunshine and they were not cheering for us. This made the finish feel a lot harder.

The Finish

The finish was well organised, with a water bottle, tshirt (although no motivational quote on the back as in previous years), medal and bag collection, however as we came through to the race village, it was carnage. The supporters were all crowding around the exit meaning security people had to hold them back and it was really really crowded. On the old course, it finished between the Marina and the Pier meaning that by the time most people finished the road to Ovingdean was already open and it made it easier to catch a bus or get a lift home. With the finish now being on Hove Lawns, all the surrounding roads are still closed, making a pick up impossible so I walked 1.5 miles to catch a bus instead. I didn't mind the walk, but for anyone who had a rough race, this would have been hard for them.



The Medal

The medal has its own chapter too. You can tell the organisers are not from Brighton this year as out of all the iconic Brighton landmarks they could have chosen to go on the medal. They choose the doughnut to the west of the Pier, complete with the details of the dents and holes in it. I hope they do something better for next year.

Conclusion

I admit, the race got inside my head. The combination of a sore hip from that camber, to hating the Hove section, with what felt like lots of cruel mind tricks, it felt really really hard. Much harder than last year. I went and checked Strava afterwards and the new route is officially 100ft hillier than last year, which may go some way to explaining it. I feel as if I have unfinished business in Hove, so have already booked to return next year and I think I will do some training runs in Hove as I need to make friends with New Church Road.

That said the whole day was great (sorry for getting grumpy in miles 17-24). I loved running with Tristan, it was great to spot and cheer on other Striders on the course, the Striders support crew were awesome and we had some many people from the crowd cheer on Seaford Striders, I felt very proud. If you were thinking of entering your first marathon, it's definitely a good one to do.

If I had any say in the matter, I would bring back the old route though.

LAUREN STORMS TO SUCCESS AT THE LONDON MARATHON

It seems like a lifetime ago that I was enjoying my almost non-running life, mid-December, and I hadn't trained in months. Despite this, I had put my name in for the London Marathon ballot months before and not been successful. I had truly lost my 'mojo' for running. In hope it could be regained, I entered my rejection into the Seaford Striders ballot for a second chance...

The night my name was pulled out for the ballot, my Mum (Gill) had text me "You'd better get training- you've won the draw for the London Marathon with Striders" (alongside many laughing emojis... I laughed too, then cried actually). Instantly I made my way to the pub to make sure that my Mum was telling me the truth- and it all became very real then.

Some of you may know that this year already I have endured not one, but two house moves. First living in Manchester, and now residing in Wiltshire. This meant most of my training and 'long runs' have either been alone, on a treadmill as I didn't know the area well, or closely followed by my boyfriend Tom on his bike. Every Sunday I convinced myself to get out there no matter what- even when I was unwell!



In the later stages of my training, I was halted by an injury, or several injuries, to my right leg. My physiotherapist gave me the go ahead for one last long run, and then a complete 2 week rest before race day. This is what I did, and maranoia completely ate me alive.

On the Friday before the race, I made my way to London to stay for the weekend, and was completely spoilt with the beautiful hotel I stayed in- a couple of tube rides away from where I needed to be on Sunday morning. I spent the Saturday at the ExCel London Running Show- where I enjoyed the memorabilia, freebies and spending a small fortune on running gear I was almost sure I'd never wear again. I was as 'race ready' as could be, and went on to carb load that evening with lots of beautiful Italian food.

Sunday morning soon came, and I couldn't speak a word. I could hardly eat breakfast, and had to practically force down porridge knowing my body would thank me later. I was so nervous I decided to not meet the other Striders running for the photograph at Blackheath, but to make my way to Greenwich where I would be starting with Mum, Dad and Tom. I think they were as nervous as I was.

When it was time to head to the start, I was lucky enough to find our lovely Zingy in Greenwich Park- instantly my worries went away and it was so nice to see a friendly face. We began our race together, slow and steady, chatting and smiling. This was exactly what I needed.

The first 10km of the race flew by, I felt strong, despite my knee and leg being taped up tightly. I was overcome with joy to see my family support at Cutty Sark, shouting my name and telling me to keep going. The pride I felt was instant. Adrenaline rushed through me. I ran comfortably all the way over Tower Bridge, maintaining a fairly steady pace- and getting a great photograph!

I continued running, looking around, taking in all of the sights, costumes, music, people and their stories. There were so many distractions around I wasn't even clocking the miles... until mile 19. I know everybody talks about "the wall"- and wow, did I hit it. My knee felt sore, my hip was aching. My right leg that caused me so much grief began to give up on me, and its safe to say, I cried- a lot.

I spent some time checking in with family and friends, even Striders on the WhatsApp. Everyone's support really pushed me through until I regained my focus. I can do it. I will do it. I kept repeating this. I was confident that I would make it over the line, the only thing I had thought about since the 15th December. I pushed aside all of my doubt and put my head down, focusing on one foot in front of the other. I came to Embankment, where I knew I was close to the end. I felt down, I was way off the 5 hours I wanted. Regardless, I kept moving, and before I knew it I saw the sign... "385 yards to go". My heart leapt. I kept pushing forwards, albeit very slowly now. I waved my hands in the air with pride, knowing my family at home were watching me go over the line.

Immediately, I burst into tears. A huge flurry of emotions came out all at once, I was proud, I was happy, I was in pain, I was completely bewildered. I stopped my watch- 5:15:24. Had I really been running for that long?! A volunteer carefully placed my medal over my neck, and noticing that I was in tears, held both of my shoulders and said "You did it. You did it. Do you need a hug?" I cried a bit more, and explained "I just can't believe it. I'm alright. I'll be okay." She smiled at me and pointed me in the direction of the goody bags, and t-shirt collection. I thanked her, and hobbled away.



I was soon reunited with my bag, which I instantly rifled through to get the crisps and full fat coca cola I had stashed in it- although I couldn't actually open either, I found that nothing in my body was working properly. I hobbled a bit further to find my Mum and Dad, who told me how proud of me they were, before hugging me and taking my heavy bag away. At this point I asked my Dad to open my crisps and drink, which he probably hasn't had to do since I was a small child and I was more grateful now than ever.

The day ended rightfully so, in the pub, surrounded by my loved ones, great food and a pint of Peroni- which took me a really long time to drink despite thinking about it the whole way around!

Thank you to all of the Seaford Striders, your support over the last few years has been unmatched, and the last few months especially. I was so proud to have represented our club for one last time. For anyone doubting themselves or wondering whether they can run that far... you can. You can do it.

REACH US

Editor: Bronwyn Ryan
bronwyn.2009@hotmail.co.uk

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/SeafordStriders/>

Website:
<http://www.seafordstriders.org.uk/>

Twitter:
<https://www.twitter.com/seafordstriders>

Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/seafordstriders>