

SEAFORD STRIDERS

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



By Bronwyn Ryan

Summer 2023 has seen races back in full swing with Striders taking part in everything from Relays to Trail Races and even a few Triathlons. It has also seen the start of training season for the Autumn/Winter Marathon season with Beachy Head Marathon coming up soon.

The Club Grand Prix still has 5 events to go this year and there is a chance to still score points and change the leader board.

The next event is the Great South Run (10 miles) on 15th October 2023. Seaford Striders have hired a coach to transport runners to and from the event.

We are also delighted to announce new members of our committee with Sarah May stepping up from Women's Captain to Vice-Chair, Ralph Jennings taking over the Treasurer role and Michelle Varndell taking over as Women's Captain.

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

RUNNING THROUGH PREGNANCY

MIDNIGHT MARATHON

BEWL ULTRA

HELLINGLY 10K

LLYN EFYRNWY HALF MARATHON

RICHMOND MARATHON

JUNIOR UPDATE

BARNS GREEN

RATHFINNY XMAS RUN

HAILSHAM HARRIERS SOCIAL RUN

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	17th 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	Month of 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.



JUNIOR STRIDER REPORTS

KITTY'S TRIATHLON

I'm Kitty and I recently took part in a triathlon.

My favourite part was the run because I love running. I was nervous about my swim but once I started I realised I was fine. I had to swim 2 lengths of the pool, 1 lap of 665m riding and 1 lap of 600m running. I even had the energy for a sprint finish at the end.

This was my third triathlon event and I got a great medal. I'd asked my mum if I had come 1st, 2nd or 3rd, she said she didn't know. The results were being read out and when they got to my category and said number 27, Kitty Winton. It was me! I sprinted to the podium and I shook hands with the man. He presented me with a mini trophy. I'd finished in 3rd place.

I hope I've convinced you to do one.



FUN IN THE SUN FOR JUNIOR STRIDERS

Juniors Striders celebrated the end of the summer term with a fun sports session.

As well as a 1k marshalled time trial, our Juniors had a great time trying out some old school favourites including the egg and spoon race, three-legged race and sack race. There were also throwing games and hurdles to try, as well as keeping everything steady with giant Jenga, (with many thanks to James Dopson for lending it!).

Junior Striders is now back at The Salts for the new term on Tuesday evenings. Our six energetic groups are aged between 6 and 16+. Each week, Junior Striders take part in activities from running games and relays for the younger members to hill reps and road runs for those aged 16+.

A massive thanks to Junior Striders' top team of coaches and volunteers for making it happen, every week!

Darren Evans, Julie Taylor, Fawzia Whittuck, Emily Eaton, Emily Farley, Frances King, Marie Marfleet, Sophie Browne, Matt Winton, Simon Homer, Nick Farley, Colin Browne, Alan Browne, Katherine Simmons, Billy Moakes and Phill Stevenson.



MIDNIGHT MARATHON

By Adam Haverly

Now, the title of this race is what attracted me (obviously) as a person that works two jobs the idea of running through the night really appealed! With future race plans this is a test I wanted to take!

I deliberated about it for weeks but in the end I booked it and made work fit around it. Upon mentioning it to another couple of striders, they felt equally bonkers and booked a place too. This was looking like an interesting evening!

Now, this wasn't the most local race, situated in Queen Elizabeth country park near the other end of the South Downs. It meant we had an hour and a half's drive each way. With a start time of 9pm, it meant you could get a lot done in the day before it was time to head off for the race! Having a race at this time in the day was a bit confusing for dining arrangements - do you have your porridge for dinner? Double lunch?

We arrived in plenty of time after a few pit stops and it became quickly apparent this was a small affair! Around 180 runners signed up for the event, which nearly didn't go ahead due to lack of numbers! They let the slower runners go around 8pm and the main field took off at 9pm sharp.

The first 45 mins or so we had the light then it was definitely head torch time! This was an out and back race along the SDW. I was trying to crack on while taking in my surroundings hoping to see them again in a few hours! The directions arrows weren't the best and I have a bit of a reputation for getting lost. I ran the first 14 miles with Bryony, she just bounced up the hills and it was all I could do to keep up! We met up with Emilie around 8 or 10 miles under some incredible moon light, everyone seemed in good spirits as the field spread out. I got to the halfway turn around feeling fairly fatigued just over two hours. I'd definitely set off too fast. Classic.



I had a massive SiS energy gel from the aid station and between 14 and 20 miles I couldn't really keep up with my legs. I lost Bryony after the aid station. Then the wheels fell off. The field was really spread out now, I knew I had people following me and I was losing the headlights in front of me, the pressure not to get lost was on! A girl behind me asked if we were going the right way, I had no idea and didn't recognize the road we were on

The last six or so miles took longer and longer. 26.2 clicked over on the watch and we were still going through a very dark, very quiet forest. At long last some lights and noise appeared! It was the finish! Hurrah! I'd made it, then a minute later Bryony crossed the finish line, we were elated to of finished a very different race! A great medal and a cup of tea at nearly 2am. Lovely.

I had another cup of tea and then Emilie came in, beaming! I was worried about being too tired for the drive home (coke and Red Bull in the car) but there was no such issue! A brief drive back to Seaford at road legal speeds, everyone dropped off safely and then the hope of getting three hours sleep vanished as I couldn't sleep for love nor money.

Hello Sunday morning! Keen to do some more "different" races, anyone fancy joining?!



Recipe Time

credit to Nick Farley

Chicken & Chorizo Stew (Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 120g cooking chorizo, chopped.
- 1 red onion, chopped.
- 2 garlic cloves, grated.
- 1 tsp hot smoked paprika
- 80g sundried tomatoes, roughly chopped.
- 600g skinless and boneless chicken thighs
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- Parsley (optional)
- Sour Cream (optional)

Method:

STEP 1

Fry the chorizo over a medium heat in a large saucepan or flameproof casserole dish for 5 mins or until it releases its oil and starts to char at the edges.

STEP 2

Add the onion and fry for 5 mins more or until soft. Tip in the garlic and cook for 2 mins before stirring in the paprika and sundried tomatoes.

STEP 3

Add the chicken thighs and fry for 2 mins each side until they are well coated in the spices and begin to brown.

STEP 4

Pour in the chopped tomatoes and stock and turn the heat down. Cover and cook for 40 mins until the chicken is falling apart and the sauce is thick.

STEP 5

Stir the lemon juice through. Serve the ragu into hot jacket potatoes with parsley sprinkled over and a dollop of soured cream, if you like.

If you'd like to share a recipe please send it over
Whatsapp or email.

1000 Miles in Pregnancy

By Anneka Redley-Cook

It's fair to say I've had some major trust issues with my body in the past few years - what with 2 mysterious sacrum fractures and fertility investigations. However I am extremely fortunate to have had a stroke of luck and fallen pregnant this year. And that year has in a way felt like 5 years! Inspired constantly by other Striders (Emily, Jazz and many others), I wondered what my own running journey would look like throughout pregnancy.

FIRST TRIMESTER

It was a strange start for me as I'd only really just got my mileage back up after injury, and knowing I was going to have to sacrifice my fitness again felt like a big ask! But of course I knew this was inevitable and I was lucky to be in this position in the first place. I found out very early on that Adam and I were expecting and those first few months dragged on like crazy especially as not many people knew. I managed to consistently run, and my mileage didn't really drop off too much - I thought I'd got away with having no symptoms, but at around week 7 the nausea kicked in. I was feeling sick for around 20 hours of everyday, without the physical relief of vomiting. The only thing that really helped was eating but this gave me about 10 minutes of relief at best. Luckily nausea is something you can absolutely run through and though unpleasant I figured if I'm going to feel sick just sitting down anyway then I may as well go on a run. I was so lucky not to experience any fatigue or other ailments during this stage (bar feeling like I needed the toilet constantly!) and kept up around 30-35 miles per week. I didn't bother with any fast running as figured there was little point now, and long runs I tended to plan with others to keep me going even if I didn't fancy it. I decided I would back off the long runs as my stamina started to drop, and just wanted to make it to my holiday in Mauritius on current mileage and fitness.



SECOND TRIMESTER

This is the part where everyone tells you the nausea wears off. Ha! Not for everyone. Thankfully it eased enough for me to only feel sick for a few hours a day rather than the majority of the day. Luckily my energy levels weren't affected (though I'm hardly bouncing off the walls at the best of times anyway) but I seemed to have issues with my legs instead. I was expecting to feel heavy and unable to breathe but alas I had none of that, just very tight calves! Then the heartburn crept in. An unpleasant side effect but again, like nausea, something you can absolutely run through. My biggest fear was that I'd be put off of my food!!! By this point most people knew I was pregnant, and my belly was growing though I wasn't huge, the weight gain I'm sure was causing some of my leg pains. I dropped my mileage from 30 mile weeks to around 25 and although my pace had slowed quite considerably, every time I did parkrun I was surprised I was still accidentally running well under 24/25 minutes! I wasn't sure how long this would last, and much like injury you have to accept that you can't compare yourself to the old you and learn that this is a new chapter of your running journey. It humbles you as a runner, knowing that you WILL get slower, it's inevitable, pregnancy is not the time for chasing PBs.

THIRD TRIMESTER

I was still happily running around 25 miles per week but the relentless nausea and worsening heartburn made it harder to enjoy some runs. I also had to adjust my schedule, as I was having to eat a couple of spoons of cereal around 4am to ease of the sickness, then eat again a few hours later, whereas I'd normally run before breakfast. And then came the fall. There is a bit of a stigma around running whilst pregnant and while most are encouraging and supportive there are always those who will frown upon it/worry. I took a nasty tumble whilst running alone and ripped most of my skin off of my knee and hands in order not to land on my front. Even though I knew I posed no risk to the baby, I was so incredibly annoyed with myself for tripping on air and feeding into that stigma of it being 'unsafe'. My hands were in a bad way for a few days (but I did get out of washing up) and it knocked my confidence but ultimately I knew I would continue running and watch my feet landing like a hawk in future. I decided to drop another run per week and settle for 20 mile weeks. Much to my shock I managed one more sub 25 parkrun at week 35. I was up nearly 2 stone at this point (and I was hardly the daintiest or leanest runner to begin with) but some tests at hospital showed the baby was on the small side and I'd need to be induced early at 37 weeks at the latest! So this is where my pregnancy running journey ends- a couple of 10 mile weeks to round off before I'm stuck in hospital for days. I'm so grateful I managed to run throughout the year and to think I've run 1000 miles with this baby is really quite surreal! Everyone at Striders has been so encouraging and it's been great to run with plenty of members.

I'm pleased to say Baby Cook arrived earlier in September - a future Strider in the making I'm sure - better get her on the waitlist for juniors!

BEWL ULTRA

By Sarah May

On the hottest day of the year, Tristan and I set out to run the Bewl Ultra, three laps of the reservoir, totalling 37.5 miles. The morning started well. Tristan was on time, early in fact to pick me up (first time for everything) and off we went.

The race starts near the Bewl Water visitor centre, so plenty of toilets and a nice café for afterwards. The start was approximately a 5-minute walk from registration, and I soon discovered there were no toilets on the route, not even the portaloos that were mentioned in the pre-race information. After a decent race briefing, our first lap started well, and we felt good, despite the heat. The route was beautiful with plenty of shady spots and views of the reservoir.



There are three aid stations on the 12.5 loop, however all three are in the first 6 miles, meaning you then go half the lap without any water. This was also hard on the mind when trying to break down the run. The third aid station was run by a chap called Davo, who recognised Tristan and seemed to think he was some kind of celebrity, insisting on taking his photo. Although well stocked for the 10k, half and marathon distances, I did feel the aid stations could have been better stocked for the ultra distance. Coke was missing, which in my view is a staple and there could have been more snacks as they only had pretzels (no sausage rolls here). As I knew this in advance, I just brought my own snacks and we were also able to leave a cool bag under the gazebo at check point 1.

We stopped after the first lap to refuel and then set off again. Pretty soon into the second lap, we both started feeling pretty ropery. At first, we put it down to the mixture of coke and coconut water we had had at the last stop, but soon it became apparent that it was likely to be heat stress. After a brief wild wee stop, we carried on regardless, but it was hard going. We were lucky enough that probably two thirds of the route was in the shade. We soon worked out the best way to survive was to run the shady parts and walk the sunny parts as it was just impossible to run when being burnt to a crisp.

Halfway round the second lap we realised we weren't going to hit the 8-hour cut off for finish. (since finishing I realise that the marathon distance cut off was 7:15 so it feels a bit unfair that for 11 miles more we only had 45 minutes). We had hopes that they might relax the cut off time, until the marshalls at an aid station told us we could continue but that they wouldn't be there on the last lap!



We had set out with an objective of finish within the cut off and enjoy it. At about mile 20, we revised this to be stay alive, just finish, try and get a medal. In that order. Despite questioning our life choices, we trundled on and came across a few other ultra runners who were looking very worse for wear and the heat had clearly ruined them.

We then ran into some problems ourselves. Tristan's hands started to go numb and tingly and given that he was the designated driver, this did not bode well. I also was experiencing an increasingly worsening tummy, despite popping two immodium already. Every time I ran, it made it worse, so we had to resort to a fast walk as I was determined not to have diarrhoea in the woods. We eventually made it to the visitor centre where I diverted off course, ran through the car park and to the proper toilets. There was a moment in the car park where I genuinely thought I was going to poo myself in front of some children queueing up to do their watersports, but I made it. Just!



Poo problems aside, I have a problem with races who don't provide toilets on the route. For anyone who says "why can't you just wild wee?", a woman cannot change a tampon whilst in a bush, and I am pretty sure there are other reasons why squatting in the wild isn't doable for everyone. I'm therefore on a mission to get race directors to ensure adequate facilities so that the races can be more inclusive.

As getting the medal was a priority for us, and we didn't want to run the risk of continuing on and finishing after everyone had gone home, Tristan came up with the bright idea of asking the Race Director if we could drop down to marathon distance to claim the medal. As it happens, as we approached the end of lap 2, the race director approached us and asked if we wanted to do the mile loop to make the 26.2 and finish. I've never seen anyone hug someone so quickly and tightly as Tristan did to that chap. So off we went, but as we wanted to be able to say we ran an ultra that day, we made it up to 27 miles, so we felt that we had achieved what we set out to do.

Once we claimed our medal, we found some other runners lying on the ground who had also dropped down to the marathon distance, so we felt in good company.

We then strode back up the hill, had a good sit down and a couple of ice creams before heading home again. Tristan also drank far too much cherry coke, which I think he regretted at about 2:30am.

Although technically a DNF for the race results, we felt like champions in our eyes. And in the hearts of all the Striders sending us messages of encouragement and love, we felt like heroes.

Hailsham Harriers Beach Social Run

By Ron Van H

On 6th August, a lovely sunny day, myself, Katherine and Stacey drove to Eastbourne to join Hailsham Harriers for their annual beach run.

This was very much a social run for all abilities. This year's dress code was Purple to celebrate the Kings Coronation and some of the Harriers had really gone to town with the theme in 80's gear and tutus! Time to open my 'wardrobe' although it's a curtain rail at the moment in the dining room/study, one of the many jobs to be done when you move to a new place. No purple in my wardrobe, and no surprise as I only have orange, blue and black so I borrowed a top from Katherine and headed East.

We started in the harbour car park and met other runners from Uckfield and Heathfield running clubs. After a friendly welcome from Harriers' Chairman Andrew, a total of 50 runners and several dogs walked through the marina to the beach for our 7 mile journey. We were instructed to run wearing old shoes (as well as purple!) and soon realised why. I got my old red Asics shoes out and was ready to rock the south coast beach.



We started 90 minutes before low tide on a flat and firm sandy beach running towards the sun. As a social run we were all encouraged to run together, with the faster runners looping back if they got too far ahead.



It was nice to run with new people and old friends, chatting whilst maintaining a comfortable aerobic state of energy running. Despite my old shoes, I was initially trying to avoid the wet areas to keep my socks dry but soon scrapped that idea. At the end when Bexhill was coming closer and closer we decided to stay nearer the water line and soon realised that we were surrounded by the lovely sea and on the other side a deeper pond of water. So time to switch to trail mode and plod back to the beach, through the water - and trying not to slip on the rocks. The seven miles seemed to fly by and gradually the iconic Colonnade building emerged on the horizon - our final destination where we sat down for a drink and something to eat.

Some of the runners decided to run back but most of us took the 99 bus back to Eastbourne. This was probably one of my favourite runs so far this year, it was non-competitive, relaxed and fun and a different running surface. It reminded me back to my army service plodding through the water. Definitely will do a repeat so keep your eyes open as I will invite Seaford Striders to join me on my return journey to the beaches of Eastbourne and Bexhill.



With many thanks to Hailsham Harriers for inviting us!

RATHFINNY XMAS RUN

The Rathfinny Christmas Run returns for 2023 on 28th December!

How far is the run?

It's a 2 x 5km loop (total 10km)

When is it taking place?

Thursday 28th December at 10:30am

How many places are there?

Only 50 so sign up quick! This event is for local runners to reduce car travel and the ecological impact on the vineyard.

Is the event timed?

The event is not chip timed but it will be timed similar to the XC rules with a finish line cordon.

I'm worried I'll be too slow!

Please don't worry there will be other Striders there to cheer you on and support you whilst completing the 10km loop.

How do I sign up?

<https://3wordruns.eventrac.co.uk/e/the-rathfinny-run-10231>

The password is: RathfinnyX



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT DARREN EVANS

Barns Green

Ha Ha Ha Half Marathon

By Leanne Lister

At the start of the year I set myself a challenge of one medal a month throughout 2023. This was to give me a focus on my running after a tough couple of years and it has truly worked!

Barns Green Half is medal number #12 (I sneaked in more than 1 a month here and there) and is definitely up there with Bewl 15 as my favourite race of the year! Having not done any terribly lengthy runs since Bewl in July and knowing I'd be running yet another half marathon at the wrong time of the month I was feeling a bit nervous in the week leading up to Barns but was encouraged by a few others that felt slightly unprepared too.



My race-eve consisted of linguine bolognese, garlic bread, a bath and an early night, in the hope it would see me race fit for the next morning. I had booked the 'fun bus' to Barns Green which took the pressure off of having to navigate my own way there and proved to be much more of a fun bus than I could have anticipated. The laughter on the way there definitely prevented any pre-race nerves and I felt calmed and relaxed as we arrived. My number hadn't arrived in the post so I had to collect one from race HQ which was quick and easy as we arrived in plenty of time.

The half was 10 mins late starting due to an influx of on the day registrations but even that didn't worry me, plenty of time for pre-race toileting! Crossing the start line with a few Striders I set off into a steady, comfortable stride, passing the brass band for the first time, a short distance from the start line. 13 miles of road running did leave me wondering how I'd feel at the end after all the summer trails runs we've been doing but clearly I'd trained well as I felt comfortable all the way round.

This was the first half without carrying water on me and it felt good, I felt free without the extra weight, with 4 water stations on the way round I made sure I took a bit of water on at each and my GU energy chews definitely gave me the boost I needed. I conquered the undulations and having told myself that I would keep my heart rate steady and not lose control of my breathing, I did exactly that.

10 miles soon came round and then at 11 I caught up with Elaine and Jane for a short time, was great to see fellow Striders on the course! Reaching mile 12 I felt like I'd still got some left in the tank so picked up the pace a little and approaching the finish even put in a sprint finish which I've never achieved in a half before!

I can honestly say that this is the best half I've ever done, the route was very pretty and I've never enjoyed a run so much, I'm now a firm believer of taking away the pressure of a finish time allows more enjoyment!

The bus was just as much fun on the way home and it was great to share post run stories with fellow Striders! I can honestly say this was a fantastic day out and this half has really given me confidence in my longer runs.

I got up the next morning feeling absolutely fine, swam 40 lengths before work and walked 3 miles after work to stretch out the legs - this has never happened before so clearly my Striders runs have been excellent prep - so happy

Thank you fellow Striders for my most memorable half marathon - same time next year



STRIDERS DISCUSS: THE HELLINGLY 10K

Ten Striders took on the Hellingly 10k organised by the Hailsham Harriers on September 17.

Our evenly balanced team of 5 ladies and 5 men ran the single loop course run on country lanes around Hellingly. It was the first time in four years that the road race had been run after both a Covid-enforced and venue change break. This year's event included a slight change to the last kilometre with the last lap around Roebuck Park.

The race was won by Bryan Brett of Eastbourne Rovers AC, with our very own Ollie Sprague expanding his trophy collection as both second placed male and topping his age group, running the race in 35:57. We also saw some great results within our team with Steven achieving a new 10k PB and Paula shedding a massive 7 minutes off her previous Hellingly 10k time.

The Hellingly 10k was part of the Sussex Grand Prix and also part of our Club Grand Prix races. The Club Grand Prix is open to runners across the Club - it's a great way to meet other runners and experience that all important Striders spirit!



So what did our team of Striders think about the Hellingly 10k?

Steve S: "It was excellent. The route was good, although I felt as if it was uphill all the way, but I did like the last kilometre and a half where you run through the woods and being able to support your fellow Striders as they come in."

Margaret: "The best bit was the finish line and running in with my trusty buddy, thank you Kat for making a difference! It was a good run, an interesting run - but way too many hills on a very hot day!"

Ollie S: "It was tougher than I expected, it was apparently a new route this year, but I enjoyed it, so it was all good!"

Paula: "It was amazing, I was smiling all the way around. I knew I had Kat ahead of me and Steven behind me. Once again a good Strider turn and good team spirit. I loved it! Lots of hills but always with the uphills comes the downhills!!"

Jeff: "I've run the Hellingly 10k a couple of times before but I prefer this route because of the bit around the park at the end. As usual, great team spirit that we normally get and next year, we want more people to come and do it!"

Sandra: "It was hilly, very hilly! I've done it before but I couldn't remember how hilly it was!!!"

Pete J: "There were plenty of hills! It was a bit of a late start for me [Pete thought the race started at 10am instead of 9am but soon caught up with the tailrunners and the rest of the pack!] but I really enjoyed it!"

Jeanette: "I thought it was a great run with really friendly marshals. The coffee and cake at the end made for a lovely atmosphere, also setting us up for the long hike back to the car park! Thank you to our Striders team for the encouragement towards the finish. It makes a lot of difference to us at the end!"



Steven: "The Hellingly 10k was well organised and marshaled by Hailsham Harriers. I wasn't a fan of the start and finish being in different places and the car park being fairly remote, but on the other hand we didn't need to worry about finding somewhere to park."

"I enjoyed the challenge of the undulating course on the hard surface and there were no bottlenecks along the course to put us off our stride. There was a positive vibe amongst the runners and it's great that we Striders had a good turnout and gave a good account of ourselves. I'm sometimes disappointed by the medals we receive, but I was really pleased with the Hellingly 10k medal! It was a really enjoyable event and I'll hopefully be running it again next year."

Katherine: "Striders team events, where you get to meet up and support runners from across our club, are always my favourite runs so the Hellingly 10k didn't disappoint."

"I thought the route was nicely challenging and I enjoyed being able to cheer on our runners as they approached the finish. This was the third event I've attended this year organised by the Harriers so it was nice to get a friendly welcome on the starting line from their chairman Andrew. Its also the only event I have ran with a cat sitting on the chip timing finish mat!"

Llyn Efyrynwy (Lake Vyrnwy)

Half Marathon

By Ralph Jennings
(Contributions and Edits by Richard Preece)

On 16th September a few Striders headed up to mid-Wales for the Llyn Efyrynwy (Lake Vyrnwy) Half Marathon. Myself, Fabian Eason and Richard Preece were joined by Barry (not a Strider or a runner, but a staunch supporter at parkruns and race events) and my best mate Stephen (also a non-runner), who now lives in the sticks nearby Lake Vyrnwy.



For quite a few years, I had been wanting to do this half-marathon. I had previously visited the area around the lake and knew it would be a stunning route. Lake Vyrnwy is actually a reservoir that was built in the 1880's to supply Liverpool with fresh water. The perimeter of the lake is just under 12 miles, thus making it a perfect location and size to host a half marathon event. It's a very popular event in Wales and attracts around 1,000 runners from all over the area, as well as those further away like our Seaford Strider group. I was also aware that it was a fairly fast course - the men's record being 1:02 and the women's record being 1:12. Those are blistering fast 'world-class' half marathon times.

In the lead-up to the event, my training had been going well except for a small set-back about a month or so prior, when it seemed like I was always fatigued with every run I did.

I think pressure, combined with the fact that I never properly recovered from the London Marathon last Spring (I went straight into trying to break sub-20 for my parkrun time), my body was trying to tell me to back-off and then re-set. This summer, I had put a lot of pressure on myself to try and break sub-20 minutes for the 5k (spurred on by the fact I wanted to beat Mark Zuckerberg's recent sub-20-minute 5k time - yes, I got a bit competitive with that thought - and still am! Lol.). The next couple of weeks, I started doing my recovery runs much slower than I usually do, and was using Zone 2 training more effectively, and I think that worked with helping eliminate the fatigue I felt because I really started to feel better. So, a few weeks before the race, my running was back on an improvement curve. I had, in my mind, set a time goal for the race (run faster than I ran the Brighton Half earlier in the year). If conditions were good, and all went well, I knew I could come close to the 1:38:58 I had run in Brighton.

The day before the race, Richard and I jogged Peacehaven Parkrun.

I couldn't miss a parkrun because I'm trying to get to my 100th milestone before the end of this year and need to do every week up to Dec 30th to make it to 100! Doesn't allow much leeway, so fingers crossed it can happen. Richard is aiming to achieve 40 Parkruns in one year (and he is closing in on 200 parkruns overall). Shortly after the parkrun, Barry, Richard and I piled into our Skoda hire-car and headed up to Wales where we would meet Stephen.



Fabian had already headed up the day before and he enjoyed some awesome Parkrun tourism by completing the Old Railway Trail Parkrun in Llangollen (don't ask me how to pronounce that!). However, unfortunately he fell ill before the half marathon, and had to DNS the race and head back home. We were gutted for him, but knew it was best for him to rest and recover as there are more events later this year. When we got to Wales, we checked into our self-catering Holiday cottage. Richard prepared a nice pasta carbo-loading dinner. Noted was the hot-tub on the back porch - something we knew would be needed after running 13.11 miles!

Yay!

Day of race: A lovely thing about this half marathon, is that the start time is 11am! That gave us plenty of time to have a small lie-in, and then prepare ourselves and drive to the start line (which they secured a local farmer's field for parking right next the start line!).

Unfortunately, all the roads in Wales are tiny and curvy with hedges that block any view of on-coming cars, so increased traffic meant it was very slow going as we got near the Lake! But we made it and parked up with time to spare. However, for some participants it was much more stressful - in fact it was so slow, they ended up delaying the start time by 45 minutes! That was a long time of waiting on our feet! Not the best warm-up prep - but luckily the weather conditions were ideal, so there was no being wet and cold at the start-line. Coach Anneka, Phill and Joel's voices rang in mine and Richards heads saying "don't forget to do your warmup and drills!" They are so important before racing to activate the muscles and avoid injuring yourself. So, about 30 mins before the start, we went for a warmup jog and did a few drills on the beautiful tree-lined roads. I remember hearing someone behind me sounding like a clippity clop of horse's shoes on pavement... looking around I saw a person wearing the same neon orange Alphafly's I was wearing - I told him I recognised that sound!! We laughed - albeit nervously as the start of the race was getting close.

The start of the Half begins with a short downhill and then a longer uphill which would prove to be the only real hill in the entire race! I loved this fact, because we ran the uphill very early on when our legs weren't fatigued, and we had loads of people around us - didn't even feel the hill to be honest. The course took us through the wooded area heading up to the dam - which is a stunning gothic looking piece of architecture.



Across the dam we went, and then onto the curvy, but 'dead flat' road that leads all the way around the lake. It was so flat, that it felt like I was running downhill the entire way - and on one of the most visually pleasant roads I've run on - with loads of small bridges over streams and waterfalls next to the road with the massive reservoir on the other side. I quickly adopted my usual (maybe annoying to some) "latch on to someone" tactic of running. Firstly, it was a couple of Maldwyn Harriers - we were going at around 7 min mile pace (which I won't lie, scared me a bit as being too fast) - until they seem to speed up, so I let them go and then tucked behind a tall ginger fellow who reminded me of fellow Strider Jon (we all miss Jon who moved up North). It wasn't a breezy day, but I felt that tucking behind someone just gave me that mental edge I needed to not over-think during a race. Even if it was a breezy day, this course is amazingly sheltered with trees nearly the whole way! After passing the 5 mile mark, the road curved around the lake, and it felt like we were heading back on the other side of the lake to where we started/finish. It seemed a bit early for this turn-around, but proved to be an optical illusion as it was just a really curvy road. But I felt pretty good at this point, so I pressed on ahead of the ginger guy and locked my eyes on the next target. I always find giving yourself targets along the way really does help break the race down into smaller more manageable sections. That's actually how I ran the rest of the race. I kept looking ahead and choosing my targets to pick-off one by one. It was such a good feeling when no one passed me, and I passed a load of people over those remaining 8 miles. With just 2 miles to go, I caught up and passed the Maldwyn Harriers who had surged ahead before. And with just a mile to go (knowing it was all downhill!), I mustered up a sprint finish and completed my fastest mile of the day. I crossed the line in 1:31:50 and was pretty much in shock that I was able to keep the just over 7 min mile pace. A year ago, I couldn't even run 5k at that pace. So, to say I was pleased is an understatement, I was ecstatic!



From Richards perspective, this was only his second half marathon event. His first was at Beachy Head last October where he ran the last 3 miles in a heavy thunderstorm. Richard completed that half marathon in 2hr 5mins. Therefore, he wanted to run Lake Vyrnwy in under 2 hrs. He ran an amazing race and finished not long after in 1:41:20 - getting a HUGE personal best and exceeding his own expectations by a massive amount! Especially impressive as he is in the midst of training for his first full marathon at Beachy Head this coming October. Richard commented to me afterwards and said that he kept looking at his watch and thinking to himself that his pace was too fast. However, he felt good so just kept running. Our friends Barry and Stephen greeted us at the finish line where the atmosphere was electric! We collected our medals, soaked up the atmosphere for a while, and then eventually headed off back to the Holiday Cottage where the hot-tub was waiting for us! Heavenly.

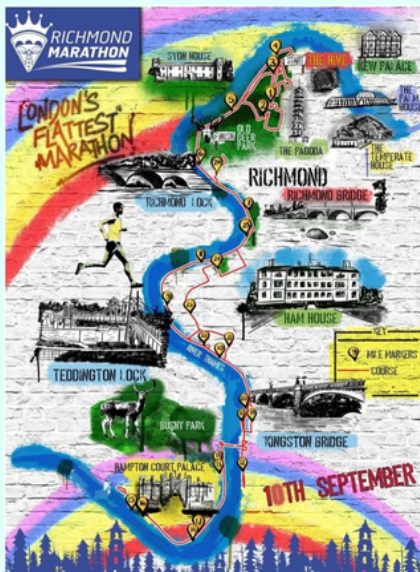
This half-marathon rates as definitely one of my favourites. I've completed over 30 half marathons in places all over (Las Vegas, Seattle, and Vancouver to name a few...) - but this Welsh one is one to remember for me! I'm definitely signing up again next year!! Who else is in?

RICHMOND MARATHON

with Sara Baitup

I have always been active however never a runner. During the Covid lockdowns, Stacey Pollard (Strider) who had been running for around a year suggested I carried out the Couch25k programme which I completed and loved. I have continued running ever since joining Striders and regularly running with Sarah's group on a Wednesday.

Along with the majority of other runners out there I entered the London Marathon ballot. Un-surprisingly I didn't get a place however I still wanted the challenge of completing a marathon and that began my search for an alternative flat marathon. I came across Richmond Marathon which was 3 months away - the ideal amount of time to follow my recommended (by Sarah May) Runkeeper Marathon training plan. I followed this rigidly for the full 3 months not missing any runs. The training was really tough, especially the long runs which I found hard but I knew they would be worth it in the end.



The actual day arrived and I made my way to London. The marathon was AMAZING and the location was the BEST. The first 6 miles were around Kew Gardens and then we followed the River Thames. I hadn't planned for the heatwave that had arrived that week particularly after training during a fairly cool summer. When I set off the temperature was in the late-20's and it crept its way up to 31 degrees. Due to the extreme temperatures I had to adjust my pace accordingly and be even more conscious to take on enough hydration and nutrition.

The organisers had arranged for extra water stations to be put out on the course however by the time I arrived at Mile 15 they had ran out of water. I was ok as I had my hydration pack with me but a lot of other runners were passing out from heatstroke and severe dehydration.

By Mile 23 the organisers were telling the runners the event had been cancelled and they needed to stop running due to London Ambulance not being able to cope with the demand as a result of the event. At this point I thought I am not going to not finish this after all the training I've done so I carried on but the marshalls, Police Force and Fire Service were forcing us to walk the final few miles.

Overall I really recommend the event. It's a great marathon in beautiful surroundings.

I'm not a natural runner so I am looking forward to some shorter, easier runs for a few months at least. Next up is the Great South Run which I'm sure will feel easy after this!



The background is a solid red color with a pattern of small, white, four-pointed stars scattered across it, particularly concentrated in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

**MINCE PIE 10
MILE**

**SUNDAY 10TH
DECEMBER**

**30TH YEAR
ANNIVERSARY**

**SUPPORTING SEAHAVEN
STORE HOUSE AND SUSSEX
HEART CHARITY**

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>