



## **Crowborough Runners**

### **Club Update April 2025 – The Marathon Edit**

I need to warn you that this is going to be a marathon edition in more ways than one, so I suggest you find somewhere comfortable.

First, a big thank you to all who have sent me contributions for this and previous editions of Crowborough Runners Update. It really make things a whole lot easier. I am sure I will not have covered everything that has been going on, with members I know hitting the roads and the trails on a regular basis and I would like to apologise in advance for anything or anyone I have missed out. Please, please, please let me know what you have been doing for future editions along with anything else you think might be of interest to your fellow members.

That said, from what I have managed to pick up, it's been another busy month with members running their socks off once again.

### **Events**

#### **April 6th 2025 - Brighton Marathon**



Part of the Brighton Marathon Weekend, this year's marathon was run by over 12,500 runners. Billed as an "undulating outing", the race started, as is tradition, in Preston Park and finished at its relatively new home of Hove Lawns. Many of those champing at the bit on the start line wouldn't have known, I am sure, that they wouldn't have been there had it not been for Grecian soldier named Pheidippides, or Phe to his friends. Luckily for them the first

organisers of the modern day marathon in 1896 chose the legend where he ran 25 miles from Marathon to the Acropolis in Athens, and not the one where he supposedly ran 153 miles from Marathon to Sparta. Although I do know at least one Club member who would be up for that. But, I digress.

You won't be surprised to know that amongst the assembled runners I have managed to establish there were at least three Crowborough runners. Namely,

| Finishing Position | Name             | Time    |
|--------------------|------------------|---------|
| <b>Men</b>         |                  |         |
| 624                | Ian Balmer       | 3:21:11 |
| 3266               | Niall Ruiz-Smith | 4:05:01 |
| <b>Ladies</b>      |                  |         |
| 868                | Sara Cooper      | 4:12:11 |

Ian writes:

"I started the race with no great expectations as my preparations had been hampered by injury and illness, and so I had only managed 10 weeks of training. Despite it being a hot day with a strong wind, which was conveniently head on for the last 1-2 miles of the home straight, I managed to finish in 3:21:11 knocking 11 minutes off of my PB at Brighton".

As you know, Niall usually runs ultras but this little diversion proved a good day for him too.

Sarah also had a good day achieving a personal best of 4:12:11. As well as catching the sun, coming 21st woman in her age category was icing on the cake.





#### **April 6th 2025 - Brighton Marathon Weekend 10k**

Now I know at least a couple of people said Hi as I made my way to the start but, sorry, I had my race head on and I can't for the life of me remember who they were. So, unfortunately, the only person I can report one is me.

I can certainly echo what Ian said as I found the temperature increased during the race, which I think caught a lot of people out. I was only too glad I had opted to run in my vest and pants. As it was, I managed to knock out a time of 1:06:17. This meant I came 3<sup>rd</sup> in my age category, so another happy bunny.

I, like my fellow runners above, was more than grateful on the day for all of the support and for spotting some familiar faces amongst the spectators.



## 19<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – Sussex Road Relay Championships

This was new venture for the Club, although these highly competitive and very enjoyable races have been an annual feature of the Sussex athletics scene in their present format since 1990. Held at various locations since then, the event moved after Covid to a new home in Preston Park, Brighton.

These races test not just the ability of individual runners but the strength in depth of a club's resources. Six valiant Crowborough Runners were more than up for the challenge and what a good day they had, with everyone enjoying their 2 mile leg and what was a fun and well supported event attended by running clubs across Sussex.

| Name             | Time    |
|------------------|---------|
| Men              |         |
| Ollie Welch      | 0:11:12 |
| Adam Styles      | 0:12:42 |
| Chris Russell    | 0:14:04 |
| Ladies           |         |
| Sioni Willams    | 0:14:49 |
| Eileen Welch     | 0:14:58 |
| Mary Nightingale | 0:16:47 |

Although not featuring in the medals this time around, the teams turned in very creditable performances with the Men coming 19<sup>th</sup> out of a field of 48 and the Ladies coming 19<sup>th</sup> out of field of 34. Great running by all and hopefully this will now become an annual event.





## 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025 - TCS Mini Marathon



Whilst the London marathon was given all the attention this year for being the biggest of its kind, the TCS London Mini-Marathon has been the biggest single event for young adults in the UK for many years. Celebrating its 40th year, more than 18,000 had the opportunity to run 1 mile or 2.6k, and in doing so cross the same iconic finish line as their older counterparts would do the following day. One of those lucky enough to be chosen to take part this year was one of our Crowborough Juniors, namely Tallulah Gough.

Well done Tallulah. Great running, and from that smile on your face an experience I am sure you will always remember.



## 27th April 2025 – The TCS London Marathon



There is no doubt that this event, this year the largest of its kind ever, anywhere, with 56,000 runners crossing the finishing line, is on every runners bucket list.

The Club is lucky enough to secure one Club place, which this year was won by Louise Ellis. Nevertheless, she was not the only Crowborough Runner to turn up on the starting line in Blackheath this year. The others had secured their place by various means, be it by taking on the added pressure of a charity place, a “good for age” place or a place, for at least one, secured via the public ballot, much to her surprise. So there they were. Runners of all abilities, ranging from marathon virgins to one who was running her 10<sup>th</sup> London marathon and one who was running his 64<sup>th</sup> marathon. Some seeking personal bests, others just looking forward to enjoying the atmosphere and the unique experience that is the London marathon and just completing the course would be enough The hours of training and the weeks of

expectation were over, and all that was left was 26.2 miles of blood, sweat and tears before they secured entry, or continued their membership, of what is a very exclusive club.



Those representing the Club were:

| Gender Place  | Name              | Time    |
|---------------|-------------------|---------|
| <b>Men</b>    |                   |         |
| 1271          | Jamie Bryant      | 2:48:11 |
| 1610          | Sam Attwood       | 2:51:56 |
| 1972          | Luke Forbes       | 2:55:13 |
| 3674          | Jonathan Rafferty | 3:08:10 |
| 8624          | Zach Drake        | 3:39:44 |
| 27559         | Peter Maddison    | 5:36:28 |
| 31418         | James Welbury     | 7:22:19 |
| <b>Ladies</b> |                   |         |
| 2786          | Heather Stevens   | 3:40:24 |
| 3668          | Janie Perry       | 3:48:32 |
| 9223          | Louise Ellis      | 4:33:41 |
| 11696         | Louise Knapp      | 4:51:24 |
| 18938         | Jo-jo Smith       | 5:47:53 |
| 19315         | Melanie Gough     | 5:51:40 |

Surely a day none of them will forget and, when the aches and, pains have faded away, many will want to experience again.

I have never been lucky enough to run the London marathon but I try and go as often as I can and I find the whole experience very emotional as I know, as a runner, the amount of dedication it takes to even get there. It is a journey that is challenging both mentally and

physically, both just getting to the start line and during the race. It is for this reason that a couple of the members who took part have chosen to share their experiences.

Jamie Bryant writes

"I have come out of it feeling somewhat philosophical after struggling with my mental health late last year. So I wanted to share a bit of inspiration, if you don't mind.

You will no doubt encounter many challenges in your life, some self-imposed (like running a marathon), many not, but they are necessary to grow and develop, no matter how challenging and you will come out the other side stronger for it.

It's been said many times by people far wiser than me it really is about the journey, not the destination; savour that journey, be proud of that journey. For my own experience in the Marathon, despite being in the shape of my life, I managed to strain my calf just a few days before the big day; far from ideal, but this was an opportunity to prove to myself what I was capable of.

On the day, it was sore as soon as I began running, but bearable. I was hoping (on reflection, perhaps foolishly), that it would ease after a few miles. However just before 8 miles I had a bad twinge, a sharp pain. I thought that was it, I can't run another 18 miles on this, or can I?

I regained my composure and decided that I wasn't going to quit as I had learnt through my recent struggles you can overcome anything if you break it down into small manageable chunks. So that's what I did. I just focused on each mile and hitting my target. I was not concerned about how far ahead or behind target I was anymore. The destination will come if I focus on the journey! Before I knew it I saw my family at Tower Bridge, I had a renewed energy and I was now comfortable being uncomfortable!

Fast forward to the last 3 miles or so. These were immensely challenging, the heat was quite intense by this point and I needed to break it down into smaller chunks now. I focused on the next 5 minutes and the next 5 minutes and so on, rewarding myself each time with a drink or splash of water on my neck. This eventually became just 1 minute goals, but I was not going to quit, and I didn't quit! I arrived at my destination, well below my original target of 2:55 but I had had an epic journey.

So the moral of the story is don't be overwhelmed by the size of the challenge and break that journey down into manageable chunks, no matter how small, embrace it and try and enjoy as much of it as you can. You will be amazed at what you can achieve!

I am proud of the time I achieved, but I am most proud of the challenges I overcame along the way; the journey was everything! After all, what value or meaning does the destination have without a journey? The time is just a time. It means nothing without all of the training, the obstacles overcome, the new skills and learnings and of course sacrifices along the way. This is why I love running".

For Melanie Gough, securing a place in the race was a complete surprise.

She writes:

“I just want to mention my thanks towards the whole coaching team at Crowborough Runners and all of the members.

Last July I had no previous running experience and felt so out my comfort zone not only running but joining a group of new people I had never met before.

From the very first session, Sarah welcomed me to the group and made me feel at ease.

From then on my love for running has grown and I look forward to coming every week to see all the other friendly runners.

I can't believe with a couple of years away from 40 I've finally found something I enjoy and has helped with both my physical and mental health. I've also managed to raise £3,100 for the National Autistic Society.

Thank you everyone at Crowborough Runners for welcoming me.”

I should mention that Melanie was not to only one raising money for a chosen charity and I am sure she, and both Louise Knapp and Louise Ellis, would also like to thank you for your love and support.

The Club is confident that we will be granted a club place for the 2026 London marathon.

If you interested in securing it you will need to enter the Club ballot, and to qualify you must:

- Have entered to public ballot and been unsuccessful in securing a place,
- Must have been a Club member for at least one year before the results of the ballot is declared,
- Must not have secured the Club place for the previous year, and
- Must have volunteered, or someone must have volunteered on their behalf, on the day of the Club 5k and 10k races.

The results of the ballot will be declared immediately following the prize-giving on the day of the 5k and 10k races.



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## 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – Adidas Manchester Marathon

Run on the same day, the Manchester marathon is a little smaller than its London counterpart with 36,000 taking part this year.

The fact that it attracts runners from all over the UK and abroad, means there are many reasons for travelling “up North” to take part, such as its legendary atmosphere and that it is known as one of the most well-organized and professionally run marathons in the UK. However, chief amongst them is it easily the flattest marathon in the UK, which makes the event perfect for securing a personal best. That is unless something unexpected happens, such as this year’s unseasonably warm weather, or as some would call it the sweltering sunshine. The same conditions that were being experienced in the capital. This inevitably caused runners, including our Club members taking part, to have to rein in their expectations. Nevertheless, great running still by those that took part.

Namely:

| Place         | Name         | Time    |
|---------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>Men</b>    |              |         |
| 342           | Olly Welch   | 2:52:31 |
| 4129          | Steve Bolton | 3:34:55 |
| <b>Ladies</b> |              |         |
| 13437         | Eileen Welch | 4:31:56 |
| 17723         | Marie Bolton | 5:01:02 |

As you can see, it was a bit of a family affair. With Olly and Eileen both turning in creditable performances. The same applies to Steve and Marie, with their daughter Ella keeping pace with her mum, or was it the other way round?

Marie writes

“Manchester was busy, hot and despite being flat, tough on this particular race day.

Steve did amazing and achieved the current good for age, paced himself well and finished strong.

Ella and I quickly realised we needed to readjust our goal due to the heat. It was a tough run but we learnt so much during the training block and the race itself. Ella got us to the start line strong, and we're delighted we finished together. All in all a great race but you can't predict the weather.”



A big round of applause for all our marathon runners



## **Members Corner**

### New and Returning Members

I am more than happy to report that the membership continues to grow and this month it's a very warm welcome to:

- Gianluca Battelli
- Diana Chislett
- Kerry Colley
- Bob Cook
- Gemma Faramus
- Ali Harvey
- Anna Oszejko
- Adrian and Kim Parker
- Byron Thomas
- Paul Wells

### In A Man in a Hurry

Seen this man before somewhere?



Okay, it's normal in the week before you run a marathon to still go for a training run. What is slightly out of the ordinary is to do so by flying 3,296 miles to partake in what is the oldest, prestigious marathon in the world, which was first run on April 19<sup>th</sup> 1897.

Yes you guessed it, our own Sam Attwood ran two Abbott Major marathons in one week, finishing the Boston marathon in 2:41:52 and then going on to run the London 2:51:56. An amazing achievement by anyone's standards.

Cheers, Sam.

### A Run in the Sun



Another member who likes to travel to run is Andrea Battelli.

### Folkestone 10 Mile

Slightly closer to home is Folkestone. Home of the annual 10 mile race that features a fast, flat course, mainly on the traffic-free seafront promenade, from Hythe to Folkestone and back.

An ideal location for your final preparations for the London marathon, hence why Olly and Eileen Welch, and James Welbury headed east and took the trip there on Good Friday.

Some excellent running by all, with the following results:

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### **The Further Adventures of Pebble**

Pebble has let me know that he, and his intrepid human companion Lisa Herbert, are off to off to run from Falmouth to Plymouth on the South West Coast trail in early May. Lisa will be taking her Crows shirt to take a picture a day (however bad the selfies come out) and we can expect fodder for our May edition.

### **Club Matters**

#### Coaching

On this score, I have some good and bad news.

I am delighted to say that Shirley Matthews has recently been awarded her Leadership in Running Fitness qualification and as such will be a regular member of the coaching team on a Monday evening and will be leading some of the Wednesday runs.

Many congratulations Shirley and welcome to the team.

What I am sad to report is that Maggi Bradgate, after many years of faithful service, in all weathers, has decided to hang up her stopwatch and whistle for the last time when her current coaching licence expires. I regularly attend the Monday sessions, when not coaching, and I have to say, as I sure will my fellow runners will agree, I will miss her energy, ability

motivate and her sense of fun, which means when the wind is howling, the rain is bucketing down and the temperature is nearing zero on a Monday evening, I am sure she will raise a wry smile, and who can blame her.

Always hoping to expend our activities, the Club is eager to recruit new members to the coaching team. The initial qualifications, such as Leader in Running Fitness, can be secured mainly via on-line learning in your own time. The knowledge you will gain will not only benefit others but make you a better runner, so if you would like more information, you can find it on the England Athletics website. The Club will meet all associated expenses.

#### Crowborough Runners 5k and 10k races

You should already be aware that this year's races will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025.

The ability to run the races is totally reliant on members of the Club giving up their Sunday morning and volunteering to marshal the course or fulfil the many other roles required to be filled on the day.

It was only by the skin of our teeth that last year we managed to get enough volunteers and even then some compromises had to be made.

This is why I am asking you to reserve the date in your diary now and I have opened a group event on SPOND for you to sign up.

#### New Club Vests

I advised recently that the Club vests in the new material had passed muster and I know a number of members took the opportunity of ordering one from the Club Shop. Unfortunately, the window the supplier made available for ordering was quite short and many members missed the deadline. Arrangements are in hand to open it up again soon and we will let you know when you can place your orders.

#### Club Vacancies

As previously reported, Bryan Tapsell took the decision to step down at the end of the last cross-country season as Cross Country Manager. I know the cross-country season is the highlight of some members' running calendar, and with the start of the 2025/26 season not too far off, a Cross Country Team Captain needs to be in post as soon as possible. If you would like to put yourself forward for the role, or before committing discuss what this would entail, please let me know.

What I haven't brought to your attention before is that Sharon Wheeler, after many, many years of steering the Club as Club Captain, has also decided to step down. This is a Committee appointment and, as such, carries with it the ability to influence the future direction of the Club. Indeed one of the key responsibilities is to act as a link between the committee and the club's members and in so doing be the members voice on the committee. Again, if you would like to put yourself forward for the role, or before committing discuss what this would entail, please let me know.

### Dates For Your Diary

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2025  | Horsham 10k     |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2025  | Summer Pub Run  |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2025  | Rye 10 mile     |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025  | Timed Mile      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2025  | Hastings 5 mile |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 | Heathfield 10k  |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2025 | Phoenix 10k     |

Finally, thank you for sticking with me to the end. There was a lot to report this month, which demonstrates to me what a vibrant community we are, with the potential to become even more vibrant.

I am also glad to report that we call ourselves the friendly running club and from the feedback I constantly receive never a truer word was spoken, as my old mother used to say.

Thank you for your support as always.

Bob