



Crowborough Runners

Club Update December 2024

Hi

Well, that's another year over.

Well, that said, not any old year by any means. I have personally not seen so much activity crammed into the Club's calendar year for a wee while, plus,

- our membership is now back up where it rightly belongs at over 100, and rising (currently 112),
- attendees' at track sessions is up,
- we have a refreshed website, with more changes planned,
- we have dragged our membership form into the 21st century,
- there have been additions to the coaching team and, fingers crossed,
- a new super-duper venue for our cross country race, thanks to Bryan and Andrew.

This amongst so much more.

However, back to the lowdown on what has been happening in the last month.

Now then, December is always a month of celebration and, as you will see, boy did we show how much we love to party.

6th December 2024 - Annual Christmas Party

A change of venue to the Crow and Gate didn't disappoint with them providing a warm welcome and a splendid buffet to suit all tastes. A section of the pub to ourselves made an ideal setting for catching up with and renewing acquaintances in, a for once, non-running environment. Add to this plenty of a glitz and glam, and that's not just the ladies, and you had the ideal recipe for a fabulous evening, which you can see from the photographs below.

Having arranged a few such events myself in the past, doing so is always approached with a degree of trepidation. However, the meticulous planning that had gone into the event was obvious as soon as you walked in the door and ensured there was never a dull moment. A huge thank you has to go to Meg for all the hard work she put into making the event such a success.

A big thank you must also go to Louise Knapp, who you already know is running the London Marathon for the British Legion, who arranged the raffle and gathered together such an amazing array of prizes.



Yes, a perfect start to the festive season.

8th December - Denbies Santa Run

Now come on, who doesn't like dressing up, if only at weekends, and a Santa Run at this time of the year makes the perfect excuse.

The 5k run at the Denbies wine estate, situated on the North Downs, is an eagerly awaited annual event, attended by hundreds of runners creating a real party atmosphere. If you don't have a Santa suit, or yours is at the cleaners getting ready for Christmas Day, one is provided. It's also just for fun, so no pressure, you can leave your Garmin on charge with a clear conscious.

December's run was no exception, with 9 intrepid Crowborough Runners making their way to near Dorking early on the Sunday morning and great time was had by all. With the rewards of a medal, a mince pie and some mulled wine, what could be better.



8th December 2024 - Seaford Striders Mince Pie Run

If a trip to Dorking didn't row your boat, a trip to Peacehaven certainly did for some other Crowborough Runners.

I had the pleasure of running the event last year and felt distinctly under dressed being surrounded by hundreds of Santas, elves, pixies, fairies, Christmas puddings, you name it. All willing to indulge in the delights of 10-mile course, taking in farm tracks, bridle ways, a hill at mile 6 described rather understatedly as testing, and a goodly proportion of mud thrown in for good measure. All for the sake of a mince pie and that all important bit of bling.

I am sure it was the same this year.

C'mon, why wouldn't you.

Huge congratulations goes to Scott Werner and Janie Perry for doing Crowborough Runners proud and knocking the course of in 1:40:41 and 1:44:04 respectively.

9th December 2024 - Marathon Workshop (2)

The second in the series of marathon workshops, being co-ordinated by Mary Nightingale and Janie Perry finished off a busy few days. The weather that night was very cold and wet, but despite the conditions a good number turned up for the track session and many of these dropped in for an informal session in the Freedom Leisure café. The session was led by Mary with a focus on race preparation, training plans for beginners, injury prevention, cross training and recovery.

15th December - ESSCCL Newplace Park, Framfield.



With the disappointment of having that annual mud fest known as Snape Wood being cancelled because of inclement weather the previous month, the Crowborough Runners team were wound up like a coiled spring on the morning the event that took place at Newplace

Park. Nevertheless, a likelihood of mud was anticipated. A location that has never before disappointed in this regard.

As it was, Bryan had used his legendary powers of persuasion and the start line saw 31 Crowborough Runners ready for the off. As always, the results were impressive, being as follows:

Name	Position	Time
Colin Tricker	4	0:33:33
James Bryant	9	0:34:51
Sam Attwood	16	0:36:02
Dean Taylor	18	0:36:08
Adam Styles	26	0:38:00
Peter Noon	27	0:38:05
Zach Drake	41	0:39:18
Gordon Berry	55	0:40:24
Hannah Jackson	77	0:42:25
Andrew Joad	82	0:42:36
John Everest	113	0:45:11
Tim Probert	118	0:45:38
Alistair Lee	153	0:48:28
Bryan Tapsell	166	0:50:04
Ashley Box	167	0:54:05
Heather Stevens	168	0:50:13
Janie Perry	171	0:50:36
Claire Styles	173	0:50:40
Louise Ellis	180	0:51:10
Scott Werner	183	0:51:43
Lorna Buckwell	186	0:51:59
Louise Knapp	195	0:53:28
Lawry Freeman	199	0:53:47
Kirsty Weeding	234	0:57:03
Kevin Battell	249	0:59:34
Sally McCleverty	250	1:00:01
Meg Calcutt	253	1:00:19
Graham Stevens	254	1:00:43
Roger Stone	266	1:02:53
Lori Tricker	280	0:06:12
Shirley Matthews	303	1:13:50

In the overall rankings, having come 2nd on the day behind Lewes, and with Black Cap approaching on 12th January 2025, Crowborough Runners are currently joint 1st place overall with Lewes, but let's not forget there is still all to play for.



18th December 2024 – Christmas Lights Run



Christmas is a time of tradition, be it smoked salmon and scrambled egg for Christmas Day breakfast, or putting Christmas presents in a sack, even though your daughter is now 44.

A tradition for Crowborough Runners is the Christmas Lights run, although with the numbers of houses now being decorated annually, it is hard to fit them all into one evening's run. With an unofficial run having taken place the previous Wednesday covering the north of the town, this was the date of the official the run, followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

A huge thank you to Sarah and Lou for leading the run and to Sarah for hosting the festivities after the run.



24th December 2024 - Christmas Eve Social Run

Although Christmas Day was fast approaching, the sprouts still needed a little longer and so there was still time for a social run on Christmas Eve morning.

A huge thank you from me and the others that joined Mary leading us through the highways and bye-ways of Rotherfield, and for her hospitality and for providing refreshments after the run at Chez Nightingale.

Mud? What mud?



Members Corner

New Members

A very warm welcome to:

- Steven Reader
- Rebecca Williams

Parkrun 200.

There is no doubt that Parkrun has had a huge effect on the running communities of this country and many others throughout the world, and on the general health and wellbeing of the nation.

If you pop along to the run in Dunorlan Park in Tunbridge Wells you can always rely on seeing a fellow Crowborough Runner. More often than not it will be Jane Meyers, Julie Erxleben, Steve and Marie Bolton. You will therefore not be surprised to hear that this intrepid foursome have in recent months all completed their 200th parkrun. Now that is impressive.



I should also add, that if you have ever wondered what happens when you toss your token into the bucket at the end of a Tunbridge Wells parkrun and how they end up on the stick for the next week, look no further. You will find the 4 of them playing parkrun solitaire in the café after most races. Taking and giving back is what it is all about.

A huge well done to them all.

The Further Adventures of Pebble and his Companion

In the last Update I introduced the uninitiated to Canicross, of which Pebble and his companion Lisa Herbert partake of occasionally and said that their plan was to undertake a run in Wittering. Well, like so much that weekend, it was sadly not to be, due to Storm Bertie. Nevertheless, they both completed a dedicated Canicross as part of the 32nd Maidstone Turkey Run on 8th December 2024.

More runs are planned, and I will keep you posted.

On the subject of cancellations, I should mention that Niall Smith's hopes of completing the Winter 55 on the 5th December were scuppered by Storm Darragh. He is however planning a 50-miler in February 2025 and will keep us posted on how he gets on.

London Marathon Update

I have mentioned before that Louise Ellis and Louise Knapp are running the 2025 London Marathon along with Jo-jo Smith. Well, I should have mentioned there will be at least a 4th Crowborough Runner, namely Melanie Gough. Mel was one of the lucky ones who entered the ballot for the 2025 marathon and got a place. She is putting that to good use by running in aid of the National Autistic Society.

You can donate to Mel's good cause by going to [Mel's Fundraising Page](#)

You can donate to Louise's good cause by going to [Louise's Fundraising Page](#)

Sussex AA Cross-Country Season

You might not know that the Club is affiliated to Sussex Athletics, which means you qualify to enter any of their races.

Sussex Athletics is in the midst of its cross-country season and the 30th November saw a number of our junior members and one of our adult members attending the 3rd race in the 2024/25 Cross Country League at Ardingly.

Never one's to disappoint, the results were as follows:

	Name	Position	Time
Juniors			
Under11 Girls (2 kilometres)	Nancy Cassidy	12	0:09:56
Under 13 Girls (3 kilometres)	Amelie Hutton	17	0:14:10
Under 13 Boys (3 kilometres)	Jasper Cassidy	26	0:12:33
U20,Senior and Vet Men (8 kilometres)	Adam Styles	79	0:37:41

The next and concluding race of the season is the in Stanmer Park on 8th February 2025.

You might also like to know that the Sussex Masters Cross Country Championship takes place at Coombe Farm in Lancing on 18th January 2025.

More details on both and how to enter can be found via the following link [Sussex Cross Country League](#).

Finally,

We are lucky to have in our midst members who are not only runners but experts in their field, who are willing to share their knowledge with us. Janie Perry, as you know, is a Sports Nutritionist and is co-ordinating, with Mary Nightingale, a series of marathon workshops. A recent addition to our clan is Hannah Jackson, who you might not know is a Sports massage therapist with a Master's degree in Sports Physiology. She got in touch with me recently and asked if the members would be interested in an article on stretching, to which my answer was a big yes.

However, before handing you over the Hannah, can I say if there is anything you would like to share with your fellow members at any time, you can let me know at the usual address.

I am anticipating that the January 2025 Update will be a little shorter (story of my life).

Kind Regards

Bob

Hannah, the floor is yours.

Common Injuries When Increasing Mileage: How to Stay Injury-Free

As the New Year begins, many of you lovely runners are turning your focus toward spring marathons or February half marathons (I'm heading to Tunbridge Wells half and know some others are too!). Increasing mileage is an essential part of preparing for these events, but with it comes the risk of common running injuries. The jump in training volume can place extra stress on muscles, tendons, and joints, especially if the body isn't quite ready to handle the load.

Three of the most common injuries runners experience during this phase are **anterior knee pain** (commonly called "runner's knee") and **shin splints**, as well as **Achilles tendon pain**. These issues can be frustrating, interrupt training plans, and even side-line runners entirely if left untreated. The good news is that with some simple preventative steps or quick acting rehabilitation, many of these injuries can be avoided or easily reduced, allowing you to train consistently and hit your plan and the Crowborough hills pain-free.

Even if you're not currently experiencing these issues, it's worth doing these exercises proactively. Prevention is always better than treatment, and building strength now will help your body adapt to the demands of training, keeping you running strong for the miles ahead.

Anterior Knee Pain (Runner's Knee)

Runner's knee is one of the most frequent complaints among runners increasing their training mileage. It's characterised by a dull ache or pain at the front of the knee, often felt during or after runs, and can result from a combination of overuse and weakness in supporting muscles like the **quads**, **hips**, and **glutes**. Poor running mechanics and a sudden increase in distance can also contribute.

What can help? Strengthening the muscles around the knee to provide better support and alignment is key. Exercises like **single-leg squats**, **side-lying leg lifts**, and **glute bridges** target the right areas. For best results, aim to perform these exercises **3 times a week**, gradually adding resistance with bands or weights as you improve. Strengthened quads and glutes are better equipped to handle the repetitive stress of running, helping reduce pain and prevent future issues.

Shin Splints and Achilles Tendon Pain

As mileage increases, it's common for runners to experience **shin splints** or tightness and discomfort in the **Achilles tendon**. Both can arise from tight or weak calf muscles that struggle to cope with the extra training load. Shin splints specifically often stem from the repetitive impact of running on hard surfaces, while Achilles tendon pain may result from a lack of flexibility or strength in the lower legs.

Strength work can make a big difference in reducing the risk of these injuries. One of the best exercises is the **calf raise**, which strengthens both the calf muscles and the Achilles tendon. To incorporate this into your routine:

- Start with **3 sets of 15-20 reps** on both legs. If you can - add a 'drop' into the action and stand on the edge of your stairs.
- As you build strength, progress to **single-leg calf raises**, and when ready, add weights for an extra challenge.

Exercise Routine

Here's a quick summary of the exercises mentioned, with suggested sets and reps so you can implement into a routine:

Exercise Muscles Targeted Sets Reps Progression

Exercise	Muscles Targeted	Sets	Reps	Progression
Single-Leg Squats	Quads, Glutes, Hips	3	8-12 per leg	Add weights or resistance band
Side-Lying Leg Lifts	Glutes, Hips	3	10-15 per leg	Add resistance band
Glute Bridges	Glutes, Lower Back, Hamstrings	3	12-15	Add weights on hips
Double-Leg Calf Raises	Calves, Achilles Tendon	3	15-20	Progress to single-leg raises
Single-Leg Calf Raises	Calves, Achilles Tendon	3	10-15 per leg	Add weights

Looking Ahead

While strength training is crucial for injury prevention, it's also important to pay attention to flexibility and mobility, which play a key role in staying injury-free. Stretching, foam rolling, and dynamic warm-ups all help maintain healthy muscles and joints. I'll cover stretching techniques and routines in a future article.

If you're already dealing with niggles, struggling to stay consistent with training, or simply want to stay ahead of potential issues, feel free to reach out for a personalised assessment or tailored advice. Every runner is different, and sometimes a specific plan is the best way to keep you on track for race day.

Happy training, and here's to a strong, injury-free season ahead!