



Crowborough Runners

Club Update February 2025

Well, that's February put to bed and with the evenings getting lighter day-by-day running in the dark will soon be thing of the past, thank goodness.

Now, I thought February would be a bit of a lean month for things happening with everyone a bit down in the doldrums after the hive of activity that was December, but not a bit of it.

My running in the month was curtailed by a winter break, although I did manage to squeeze in the Chichester 10k, along with Sharon Wheeler, on what was a very cold and frosty morning. Our times were okay, bearing mind Sharon is still recovering from her fall and I am trying to recover from that extra serving of Christmas pudding. As you can see, members have been squeezing in a lot more than that, with PBs already tumbling thick and fast, as the cross-country season comes to a close and road racing starts to begin in earnest.

5th February 2025 – The Return of Batter and Chatter Nights



Yep, after a Christmas break, batter and chatter nights were back on the menu for Wednesday Runs.

Just the sort of thing you crave after a run. Add to this a catch-up with your running buddies and you have the perfect recipe for an enjoyable evening.

As always, a good time was had by all.

So, keep your eyes peeled for the date of the next one on SPOND.

10th February 2025 - Marathon Workshop 3 – Nutrition and Hydration



So you've completed your marathon training, tapered so that you are feeling like a coiled spring on the day, had a good night's sleep, had a wee and checked you are fully hydrated and you are ready to go, except for one thing. Namely, making sure you have fuelled properly before the race and have with you what you need to maintain your performance during the race.

Janie Perry, as you know, is a Club member, a qualified sport nutritionist and has completed a number of marathon world-wide. An ideal combination for providing her fellow members with the advice on marathon preparation they need.

At the workshop on the 10th February 2025 she provided oodles of useful information. For those that couldn't attend, and a recap for those that did, Janie's main recommendations were as follows:

- A breakfast on race day of mainly carbohydrate, with low fibre and a small amount of protein, for example a bowl of porridge with half a portion of protein powder or some yogurt. It doesn't need to be massive as your body will be relying much more on what it's stored the few days before. Janie uses a protein bar (with 23g of carbs and around 10g of protein). That works for her. Whatever you decide, make sure you have tried it in training before a long run to make sure you know what works best for you. Eat your breakfast 3 hours before a race and then a gel 5-10 minutes before the start. Only consume water in between this period.
- Aim for 60 grams of carbs every hour during the race. That's about 3 gels per hour taking a mouthful little and often.
- On Race Day, stick to your plan.
- You should have practiced your fueling strategy during training. Race day is not the time to try new gels or foods. This is the way you will find out what works best for you.

- Start fueling early in the race (around 20–30 minutes in) and keep going at regular intervals. This is because once you are behind on your fueling, it's difficult to catch up! Remember it takes 10 minutes for sugar to hit your bloodstream. So, if your blood sugar is dropping (as will be your performance), it's going to take at least 10 minutes for blood sugar levels to start rising.
- Practice how you are going to carry your gels – a hydration belt, a hydration vest (although note that some races – for example Boston and New York Marathons – sometimes don't allow them), a bra with pockets (ladies only) or shorts with pockets.
- Use caffeine wisely! Janie suggests a good cup of coffee with breakfast and then a caffeine gel at the start line then again at mile 15 and if needed, at mile 20.

The evening was, as were the previous workshops in the series, very well attended. All who were there I know learnt a lot and are now are in a better place for the big day, whenever or wherever that may be.

I would like to take the opportunity to extend a big thank to Janie and to Mary Nightingale for organising the series of workshop and I will, on your behalf, be doing some arm-twisting to see if they are willing to host another series at some time in the future.

16th February 2025 – ESSCCL Whitbread Hollow



The race at Whitbread Hollow was the penultimate race in this season's East Sussex Sunday Cross Country League (ESSCCL) with the race starting with Crowborough Runners still with aspirations of securing the championship.

I am assuming on this occasion, as the song goes, for those that can remember it, which means probably only me, it was not so much of a case of as on previous occasions:

“Follow me follow,
Down to the hollow,
And there will we wallow
In glorious mud.”

For those that don't know it, or were at home tucked up nice and warm, Whitbread Hollow is officially listed as nestling just below the South Downs, a sweet little loop with stunning sea views, with a plethora of pretty coastal plants. Slightly steep in places. Not that the 27 Crowborough Runners that ran on the day had time to take in any of this as they were on a mission.

The results on the day were as follows:

Ladies

Finishing Position	Name	Time
112th	Heather Stevens	0:40:50
135th	Janie Perry	0:42:39
141st	Christy Styles	0:42:59
147th	Claire Styles	0:43:12
170th	Lorna Buckwell	0:45:04
182nd	Meg Calcutt	0:46:11
183rd	Louise Knapp	0:46:11
202nd	Mary Nightingale	0:48:08
225th	Sally McCleverty	0:51:56
264th	Jayne Meyers	0:57:09
272nd	Shirley Matthews	1:02:20

Men

	Name	Time
2nd	Colin Tricker	0:30:20
9th	James Bryant	0:31:03
13th	Sam Attwood	0:31:43
17th	Dean Taylor	0:32:46
18th	Jonathan Rafferty	0:32:48
28th	Zach Drake	0:33:53
41st	Gordon Berry	0:34:50
46th	Peter Noon	0:35:34
76th	Tim Probert	0:38:24
85th	John Everest	0:38:52
120th	Alistair Lee	0:41:15
174th	Lawry Freeman	0:45:33
180th	Francis Leary	0:46:07
218th	Graham Stevens	0:50:11
244th	Ron Cutbill	0:54:30
252nd	Roger Stone	0:55:26

As you can see, another blistering performance from Colin Tricker coming 2nd overall and 1st in his age category. Huge congratulations also to James Bryant and Sam Attwood for coming

2nd and 3rd in their age category and to Johnathan Rafferty and Dean Taylor for coming 2nd in their respective age categories.

There was also a good contingent of Juniors who as always put in excellent performances. Namely:

Finishing Position	Name	Time
U11B		
5th	Zak Bryant	0:09:25
U11G		
1st	Nancy Cassidy	0:09:13
U13B		
2nd	Jasper Cassidy	0:07:51
4th	Charlie Workman	0:08:38
6th	Sam Buckwell	0:09:18
U13G		
1st	Amelie Hutton	0:08:34
3rd	Charlotte Howard	0:08:41
4th	Amelia Brown	0:09:02
7th	Lottie Brown	0:09:53
U17B		
2nd	Jacob Smith	0:13:53
U17G		
3rd	Anna Ivaldi	0:20:54



So where did that leave us.

Bryan Tapsell reports:

“Well, in 2nd place out of 17 teams. Yes, this is how good we are.

Lewes are in 1st place, 3 points ahead, so we would need to win at Pett and Lewes need to finish 4th or lower for us to win the league. Keep believing though, that this is possible!

Polegate Plodders are in 3rd place, 3 points behind us, which raises the question do we want to suffer the indignity of losing to a team called PLODDERS. The answer is an almighty No! This is why the Club needs to put up a good performance at the final race, because we must hold on to our second place if nothing else.

Eastbourne are currently in 4th place

Last season's winners Hastings are in a distant 5th place. So, a one hit wonders then.

With one race to go where do our incredible individual Crowborough Runners stand.

Current leaders in their age category are:

Category	Name
Senior Woman	Christy Styles
F40	Heather Stevens
F50	Janie Perry
F60	Sally McCleverty
Senior Male	James Bryant
M40	Colin Tricker
M50 Dean	Dean Taylor
M60 Andrew	Andrew Joad
M70 Graham	Graham Stevens

ESSCCL Positions - Crowborough Runners in the top 3 are follows:

Category	Name	Position	
F55	Claire Styles	2nd	
Senior Male	James Bryant	2nd	
M40	Colin Tricker	1st	Graeme McIntosh of Wadhurst Runners is only 10 points behind but has never beaten Colin.
M45	Zach Drake	3rd	Eddie Lancaster of Port Slade Hedgehoppers not far behind, also a certain Gordon Berry of Crowborough Runners is in with a chance as well. However, Jonathan Rafferty has only done two races, so if Jonathan runs at Pett, it's possible that Jonathan could pass all of them.
M50	Dean Taylor	2nd	

23rd February 2025 - Tunbridge Wells Half Marathon



So who can resist half marathon when it's virtually on your doorstep, which is why there is always a strong contingent of Crows who enter the Tunbridge Wells Half each year and this year was no exception. Also, a perfect event for measuring where you are on your path to the London marathon.

The race has won many plaudits in the past, including being voted in 2019, in the "Let's Do This" Challenge Awards, 5th Best Half Marathon in the South. The course is also famed for being a scenic and challenging route, including the infamous Spring Hill from Fordcombe to get you back to the Wells. Would you believe it is a 300-foot ascent? Well, if you have run up it, yes you would. Every last foot of it.

A sterling performance from the Crows as always, with the results on the day being:

Ladies

Finishing Position	Name	Time
665th	Janie Perry	1:54:35
805th	Sarah Cooper	1:57:35
869th	Megan Calcutt	2:00:29
930th	Louise Knapp	2:02:36
980 th	Louise Ellis	2:05:24
1149th	Kirsty Weeding	2:14:18
1236th	Marie Bolton	2:19:50
1246th	Melanie Gough	2:20 58

Men

	Name	Time
17th	Sam Attwood	1:18:34
32nd	James Bryant	1:21:30
119th	Christopher Price	1:30:32
123rd	Zach Drake	1:30:58
439th	John Everest	1:46:00
641st	Alexander Gusak	1:53:29
1052nd	Francis Leary	2:07:57

Great running by everybody who took part but if you don't mind I would like to give a shout out to Attwood/Calcutt combo. Meg managed a 2 hours flat and in the process secured a new personal best knocking 22 minutes off of her old one. Sam on the other hand lead the race for a short way, was the first Crow home and ended up in 17th place overall. If that's not worth tooting your horn about what is I ask myself?

Also on the personal best front, Lou Knapp secured a new one confirming that her training for the London Marathon is going extremely well. I have also been asked to give Lou Ellis a mentioned who injured her knee in a fall recently. She assures me she wasn't "racing" on the day. Seriously?

Oh, and I nearly forgot to mention Melanie Gough who only started her running journey last July, ran her first half-marathon and still can't quite believe she finished the course.







A big thank you to Hannah Jackson for most of the photographs.

2nd March 2025 – Brighton Half Marathon



Five plucky Crows took to the streets of Brighton on Sunday 2nd March 2025 to view many of the key landmarks of the city, including the i360 and the Royal Pavilion, as well as to enjoy the bracing cliff tops of East Brighton.

The race featured a new start, at Hove Lawns, and the weather was just what you would have ordered and was perfect for running. Whilst the race was started by local comedian, actor and keen park runner, Joe Wilkinson, I understand it was no joke finding somewhere to keep warm before the start. Nevertheless, a good result by all who participated.

The results on the day were as follows:

Ladies

Finishing Position	Name	Time
1144th	Heather Stevens	1:40:25
4980th	Sarah Cooper	2:05:44
6489th	Sarah Smith	2:20:06

Men

	Name	Time
2843rd	Alistair Lee	1:52:02
7112th	John Tighe	2:26:50

If you haven't spotted it, Sarah Cooper knocked off her 2nd half-marathon in just over a week. That's some going.

Every participant in every race I am sure has a story to tell of why they ran on the day and how they got there. I always find it quite emotional taking part in these large events with so many people running for a charity and in so doing saying thank you for the help and support they and their loved ones have received. It's particularly poignant when one amongst them is one of your own.

I think many people know that Alistair was diagnosed with bladder cancer in March 2023, quite soon after he became a Club member. Thankfully, he is in remission and so he saw this year's half-marathon as a chance to raise funds for those similarly affected. If you would like to contribute, you can do so by going to Alistair's fundraising page via the following link <https://giving.fightbladdercancer.co.uk/pf/alastair-lee>



Members Corner

New Members

A warm welcome to Nick Harvey.

Now I Would Walk One Hundred Miles



So go the words of the song but that is not good enough for member and Coach Niall Smith who has proclaimed his aim is 100-mile ultra this year and on his way he recently completed the UK Ultra Winter 55 miler at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

So how did go for him?

Niall reports

“0-10km, I started relaxed, maybe a bit too relaxed, but soon found my rhythm with the main group. I might have pushed a touch too hard, but I tried to ease back and settle in. It felt good to get going.

10-30km was surprisingly smooth. I was worried about hitting that 20-30km energy dip I've had in other races, but it never came! The hills were definitely starting to bite by 30km, with 600m of elevation in the legs, but I kept focused and stayed in my groove. I was actually 20 minutes ahead of my plan! Then the rain started, and boy, did it rain!

30-40km was all about those aid stations. They were coming thick and fast, which really helped me stay focused on getting to the next one. I hit the 33km aid station, a quick fluid refill, and then onto the 40km.

At 40km, I took a proper break – a good 10 minutes. Changed my top, ate some pizza (fuel of champions!), and hydrated. Some people flew through, but I needed that reset.

40-52km Oh the mud! It was insane. Going up the downs, I had zero grip, one step up, two steps back. Most of the tracks were just mud or flooded. I got to 48km and couldn't see the aid station, which started to worry me. Finally found it at 51km, not sure if they moved it or changed the route. Felt good physically, but my head was freezing in the rain, so I pulled up my hood.

52-75km was where I found my groove again! I was motoring, using my poles, and passing people I'd seen at the start. Loved it! I did get confused by my race plan, which said I'd be at the 62km aid station at 7 hours 15 minutes, but I was going to be closer to 8 hours. Just shrugged it off and kept going.

75km... that drop down! Steep and slippery, I had to take it so slow. Definitely need to work on my descending. Got to the aid station, grabbed my head torch, and re-fuelled for the final push.

75-87km was tough. Dark, muddy, and barely any track to run on. I just kept pushing, using other runners' head torches as targets. Burton was the worst mud, I even took a tumble. Legs were slowing, but I pushed to the finish.

I'm really happy with how it went. I felt strong for most of the race, my nutrition and hydration strategy worked brilliantly, and I felt confident and relaxed. It was a good start to the year.

Areas to improve? The time discrepancy with the plan, definitely. Need to ignore that next time. I think I over-packed on food, too. And I need to focus on pushing through those last few kilometres.”



Thank you Niall. Great running but I have to say, rather you than me.

Other Club News

Runners Safety

I am sure you will appreciate that the Club's coaches and Committee take the safety of the Club's members very seriously, be it on the track or on Wednesday runs. It was with regard to the latter that the “no light-no run” rule was recently introduced for the winter months.

You should also have heard recently from Ron Cutbill about the ID tags to be available for every member for when they go running that can be attached to the laces of your shoe, on which can be put emergency contact details and medical information in case of accident.

With the same aim in mind, all of the Clubs coaches have recently been issued with a small first aid kit to have with them in case any minor emergency. In fact, by chance, the one issued to Lou Ellis was road tested, more by accident than design, on the day of deployment and proved highly effective. Lou, as you can see from the above, was soon up and running and was able to continue with her marathon training almost unabated. However, I understand that the outcome for you new Sweaty Betty tights was terminal.

Replacement Vests

Over the months a number of comments have been received about the current Club running vests and few, if any, have been complimentary. So, no sweat, we have been trialling running vests to the same design that are more akin to the running vests we are all used to.

The feedback from the runners that have been trialling the vests has been extremely positive. It is for this reason that our current manufacturer is to be requested to make vests in the new material to be available for members to purchase.

I must ask you not to get too excited, as the request has only just been made and though we would be looking for some improvement in delivery lead times, I wouldn't like to get your hopes up. More information will be available when they are available via the Club shop.

Some Dates for you Diary

- 16th March 2025 ESSCCL Pett

The last cross country race of the season will be at Pett on 16th March 2025. It will also be Bryan Tapsell's last race as Club Cross Country Manager.

Yes, after 14 years Bryan has decided to call it a day and pass on the baton having been instrumental in increasing the number of members partaking in the cross country events, with the highlight of his reign being the Club securing 1st place in 2022/23.

I know that Bryan will continue to be a fixture at future cross-country events and will be back running when he recovers from his injuries. However, I would like to take this opportunity thank him on your behalf for all the time and effort, and the enthusiasm, he has put into the role over so many years.

What this means is the Club is seeking a new Cross Country Manager. I will be sending out details of what the role entails shortly and seeking nominations. If you would like details of what role entails in advance of this, please contact me at the usual email address.

16th April 20-25 - Sussex Road Relay Championships

Relays test not just the ability of individual runners but the strength in depth of a club's resources and these highly competitive and very enjoyable races have been an annual feature of the Sussex athletics scene in their present format since 1990.

Awards each year go to the first three teams as well as the three fastest individual runners in each age group and, although it is not surprising that the larger Sussex clubs have featured prominently, the awards have been well spread over most of the county clubs over the years.

All teams will consist of 3 athletes, except U20M/SM teams which will consist of 4 athletes. U17s can choose to run as part of senior teams or form a complete U17 team of 3. U17B will run with the senior race but finish after leg 3.

Masters may choose to run in senior teams and/or the dedicated masters' race.

With categories ranging from Under 11s to M60 there is a lot of scope to choose from.

If you are interested can you respond to Chris Russell on SPOND.

Well, as I always say, that's it for another month and I hope you enjoy reading what has been going on.

Remember, I am always eager to receive anything you would like to share with your fellow members at the usual address.

Bob