

HERNE HILL HARRIERS SENIOR MEN'S ROAD RUNNING REPORT FOR 2007 TO 2008

ROAD RELAYS

Kings of the county over cross-country Herne Hill Harriers may be, but in recent years the team has failed to replicate its domination over swap wind-swept, mud-caked grassland in county road running championships. Quite why this should be the case remains a mystery as a full strength team would undoubtedly be serious contenders, if not favourites for these events.

Viewed in this context, the fourth place achieved by the senior men's team in the Surrey Road Relays at Wimbledon Park is at least a step in the right direction and represents an improvement from 2006 when we failed to muster a quorum of 6 runners. Although ineligible for the championship race by virtue of the inclusion an Egyptian and a Cumbrian in the 6-man team, this was our highest finishing position in this event since we last triumphed in 2002, despite the absence and unavailability of several key team members. Those that did run, however, acquitted themselves admirably.

Never out of the top 5, we indeed led after the first and second 3 mile legs, following a strong run by the said Egyptian, Ali Hassan, a welcome last minute addition to the team which would otherwise have been incomplete. Ali actually managed to carve out a healthy advantage towards the end of the first leg which was surrendered after he deviated slightly from the recognised route, but he was nonetheless able to regain his composure to record the fourth fastest time of the day, 14:49, and hand over to Alan Barnes in the lead.

Alan was perhaps not at his very best, though still produced the third-fastest time of the day, 14:45, in extending the lead further.

Following him, our third-leg runner, Toby Clarke, probably did not expect to run in the first team, let alone take over in the lead. Undaunted at this prospect and unfazed when faster runners ran past him, he excelled, by his standards, and produced one of best runs to date to finish his leg in 17:52.

To some extent, the senior team's revival was assisted by the absence of an M40 team owing to several would-be members of an M40 team being away at the World Masters Championships in Italy. This at least enabled Tony Harran to once again be drafted into the senior ranks. Although not on top form, Tony produced a gutsy run of 16:08 which made inroads into the advantage of the teams immediately ahead, before handing over Sam Knight. Sam couldn't quite match Tony's time, recording 16:18, but he nonetheless put last leg runner Jeff Cunningham in a position from which he could attack.

At the South of England 6 stage relays 2 weeks later, while not at our best, we finished well enough up the field to be invited to compete in the National relays. Iain Lockett illustrated just how emphatic our M40 relay win could have been by running 18:57 on the opening senior stage, a time only narrowly bettered by one runner in the M40 race. Iain handed over to Egyptian Ali Hassan in 17th position and Ali ran well enough to hold us in 18th at the end of the 2nd stage with 19:51. Rob Karn shrugged off a heavy cold to get round in 20:32 on leg 3 to come home 25th, the threshold for National qualification which despite a weaker overall 2nd half we were able to maintain and slightly improve on.

Simon Coombes ran 20:15 to move us up to 23rd on 4th stage handing over to Jeff Cunningham who ran 20:28 to place us 22nd with one stage left to run. This is where our challenge could have come to an end, as a couple of late withdrawals had left us with only 5 runners for a 6 man team. Fortunately Vic Maughn was persuaded to "jog round" the final stage as a "warm down" from his vets race to ensure a complete team and after a steady opening lap did rather more than that by overtaking just about any that had earlier overtaken him when running a far more competitive 2nd circuit to bring us home in 23rd and ensure qualification.

Having secured the right to be contest the National 6 stage relays in October, a combination of injury, illness and unavailability conspired against us in the week prior to the race and we were not able to make the trip to the Midlands.

The same 3 factors again ravaged the squad in the lead up to the South of England 12 stage relays which were contested at the same venue as the 6 stage equivalent at Aldershot, albeit over a slightly adapted course intended to cater for both long and short relay legs. Unperturbed, a superb first leg from Iain Lockett in 26:56 saw the team place as high as 4th in the early stages, while a number of solid performances mid-race and a late surge in the later stages saw the team gain places to finish 15th overall in the SEAA competition (although both Shaftsbury Barnet and Windsor, Slough Eton & Hounslow finished ahead of us but were ineligible for the SEAA Championship). Although not matching the 10th place achieved in 2007, this was nonetheless a commendable performance from an understrength and depleted team.

An ultimately defiant team travelled to Sutton Park, Birmingham to contest the National 12 Stage relays, something many of our local rivals failed to accomplish and did the job of keeping our club on the running radar. We acquitted ourselves well enough, placing 26th of 52 finishing teams and we even improved on last year's overall team time by 80 seconds (and 10 places).

This event has in recent decades constituted the best day out in British distance running bar none, and although the standard in depth is declining to such an extent that we achieved one of our highest ever positions with one of our slowest ever team times, many of the finest runners in the country are in evidence here and this is an important fixture at which we as a club should strive to be represented.

Rather than bemoan the fact that we were even further below full strength than at the SEAA event earlier in the month, those who made the trip deserve praise, as all did their very best for the team. Well done to all of our 12 on a day when many other distance running outfits of note were unable to complete a team, naming no names! Suffice to say that of those clubs who contest the men's Surrey League at cross country, only Herne Hill Harriers and Belgrave Harriers had a full complement, and a few other "top" local and not so local clubs were also either partly or wholly missing in action.

Iain Lockett got us off to yet another cracking start following his fine opening stage in the SEAA event, at the age of very nearly 41 finally getting around to running a long stage at this event. This was indeed his HHH debut in the National 12 stage road relays, although he has run for us at the same venue in the 6 stage equivalent and the British Masters relay. Iain ran a strong stint around the "long" stage advertised at 5.38 miles and came

through to place an excellent 16th with a time of 27:08 which was surely not beaten by any other M40 on the day.

Iain Yates managed to avoid having to work on the Saturday morning to ensure we had a full team and ran very well on the next stage, the first of the "short" legs of 2.995 miles. Iain kept us in the top 20 with our best short time of the day in 15:29. As the long and short stages alternated we held onto our position pretty well thereafter. Ben Paviour ran 28:20 to move us up to 18th on 3rd stage followed by Vic Maughn who battled well on leg 4 against strong opposition to record 16:02 and bring us in 22nd.

Our remaining team members with their times and positions on handing over were as follows: Keith Newton - 28:56 - 22nd; Basil Wallace - 17:19 - 23rd; Ali Hassan - 29.40 - 23rd; Ben Hallifax - 19:01 - 24th; Tony Harran - 32.20 - 26th; Geoff Jerwood - 19.15 - 26th; Simon Coombes - 29.55 - 26th and James Ward - 17.47 - 26th. This represented a great effort from all who were involved, although it is frustrating to speculate as to how high we would be capable of finishing with something approaching our very strongest 12.

FRANK HARMER MEMORIAL 10K

The Frank Harmer Memorial 10k returned to its spiritual home of Brockwell Park on 2 March 2008.

Entries were lower than in previous years, but the relatively low-key event retained its friendly and welcoming atmosphere and resulted in a clean sweep of senior prizes for the first time. In tough, windy conditions, James Jarvis was first to the finishing line in 34:07 with second place Jeff Cunningham not far behind in 34:39. Andrew Aitken was third in 35:06. This alone was enough to secure the men's team prize yet again.

In the women's race, Monique Davis was first in 42:02 followed by Suzanne Swaine in 44:18 and Jmaela Brooks in 46:53, like the men securing the team prize without a challenge. Rebecca Barrow won the W35 race in 46:59.

MARATHONS

Matt Norminton remains the club's leading marathon runner having completed no fewer than 3 marathons and come tantalisingly close to breaking the 2:20 barrier. Matt tasted victory in the Eugene Marathon on 3 May 2008, recording his fastest time of the year in 2:20.04. Earlier in the year, he had placed 9th in the Austin Marathon after a steady run of 2:26.08 and recently finished 17th in Toronto in 2:22.28.

Other impressive marathon performances in the last 12 months include Dave Mulvee's debut at the distance in the Nagano Marathon in April where he set a mark of 2:24.07 despite running very much on his own after 8K and Brian Wilder's recent effort of 2:31.24 in 70 degrees heat in Chicago.

Second-claim member Ben Whitby finished 23rd in the Berlin Marathon in 2:22.37 - within 20 minutes of Haile Gebrselassie's new world record.

Rob Karn was the first man in red and black hoops to finish the London Marathon, a race run in what could be described as changeable climatic conditions, in 2:42.09. Jonathan Stead was a few seconds slower in 2:42.43. Our first female club member to finish was

second claim Clare Martin, running in a Wales vest, who ran an excellent 2:51.08, while our most prominent first claim runners were Clare Pauzers in 3:07.42 and Gabby Carnwath in 3:12.04.

Rob Jacobs recorded a time of 3:07.46 as an M50 after limited training and having only returned from a skiing holiday the night before. Andy Millbank finally completed the 26.2 mile distance and commented that "at last after 20 years, I can tick it off the list (as well as being able to talk knowingly about it). And, during the last calamitous hour, I was overtaken by Scooby Doo, several men in kilts and a clown."

Ultra-distance runner Glen Keegan finished in 3:45.29 and Liz Summers finished inside the 4-hour barrier in 3:52.51. Phillip Henwood was next home in 4:08.36, while Elekwa Onwuchekwa recorded 4:36.16 and Sue Wade 5:25.06.

A number of second claim members, running in the colours of their first claim clubs, produced notable finishing times, including John McFarlane 2:23, Orlando Edwards 2:26, Mike Boucher 2:28, Matt Shone 2:29, Ben Whitby 2:30, Bob Harrison 2:55 and Mike Ashby 2:57.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP RACES

The 4 mile Yacht handicap was not contested as no competitors appeared. John McFarlane claimed the 10 mile title after being the club member to finish the Cabbage Patch 10 in October 2007 in 51:04, albeit in the colours of Thames Hare & Hounds. James Jarvis claimed the 10K championship by winning the Frank Harmer 10K, Paul Doyle retained his half marathon title in the Ranelagh Half Marathon clocking 75:54 and John McFarlane is the club marathon champion following his London effort of 2:23.17.

Finally, in the early part of this season, the team claimed bronze medals in the Surrey relays, finished 26th in the South of England 6 stage relay and 45th in the National 6 stage version last weekend. The season continues...

James Ward
Men's Road Running Captain
27 October 2008

FULL RESULTS

SURREY ROAD RELAYS – 8 SEPTEMBER 2007

| | Time |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Ali Hassan | 14:49 |
| 2 Alan Barnes | 14:45 |
| 3 Toby Clarke | 17:52 |
| 4 Tony Harran | 16:08 |
| 5 Sam Knight | 16:18 |
| 6 Jeff Cunningham | 15:44 |
| TOTAL | 1:35:36 |

SOUTH OF ENGLAND 6 STAGE ROAD RELAYS – 29 SEPTEMBER 2007

| | Time |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Iain Lockett | 18:57 |
| 2 Ali Hassan | 19:51 |
| 3 Rob Karn | 20:32 |
| 4 Simon Coombes | 20:15 |
| 5 Jeff Cunningham | 20:28 |
| 6 Vic Maughn | 21:39 |
| TOTAL | 2:01:42 |

SOUTH OF ENGLAND 12 STAGE ROAD RELAYS – 5 APRIL 2008

| Herne Hill Harriers | 4:25:36 | Position at end of Leg |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Iain Lockett | 26:56 | 4 |
| 2 Simon Coombes | 14:05 | 8 |
| 3 Ali Hassan | 30:05 | 16 |
| 4 Basil Wallace | 15:30 | 19 |
| 5 Ben Paviour | 28:00 | 16 |
| 6 Tony Harran | 15:24 | 17 |
| 7 Keith Newton | 28:24 | 15 |
| 8 James Ward | 15:24 | 16 |
| 9 Jeff Cunningham | 29:06 | 17 |
| 10 Ben Hallifax | 17:10 | 17 |
| 11 Rob Karn | 28:40 | 16 |
| 12 Geoff Jerwood | 16:52 | 16 |

NB – Shaftsbury Barnet and Windsor, Slough, Eton & Hounslow both finished ahead of Herne Hill Harriers, but were ineligible for the SEAA Championships, thus promoting HHH to 15th place.

NATIONAL 12 STAGE ROAD RELAYS – 26 APRIL 2008

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | Iain Lockett | 16 | 27:08 |
| 2 | Iain Yates | 20 | 15:29 |
| 3 | Ben Paviour | 18 | 28:20 |
| 4 | Vic Maughn | 22 | 16:02 |
| 5 | Keith Newton | 22 | 28:56 |
| 6 | Basil Wallace | 23 | 17:19 |
| 7 | Ali Hassan | 23 | 29:40 |
| 8 | Ben Hallifax | 24 | 19:01 |
| 9 | Tony Harran | 27 | 32:20 |
| 10 | Geoff Jerwood | 27 | 19:15 |
| 11 | Simon Coombes | 27 | 29:55 |
| 12 | James Ward | 27 | 17:47 |
| TOTAL | | | 4:41:12 |