

Kent AC Newsletter – January 2019



Notes from the Editor

For those who know me, what you are about to read will sound like a broken record and for that I apologise. But since January is a time of patience and renewal, instead of rolling your eyes before sneaking off for a few more training miles, I hope you will forgive me by continuing to read on regardless. Then do the miles because the training calendar has ticked back to zero.

For those that don't know me, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as Owen Hind. I have been a member of Kent AC member since 2013 and after some meandering around shorter racing distances, have settled as a distance track runner with some apparent talent over the mud.

For the last two years I have been living, studying and running in a small Texan university town in the hope of unlocking my full running potential. As well as providing the time and financial support to pursue the dream, a major way the collegiate system helps runners achieve this is by insisting on high levels of professionalism within the squad, and providing support necessary to maintain those levels. This is achieved not just with a full-time coach, but also strength and conditioning coaches, prehab like ice baths available and an entire administrative department organising kit drops and competitive racing schedules.

Not only that, but most sports departments have attached media personnel to celebrate the successes of athletes across all sports, through press write-ups, media interviews and promo-videos. For foreign athletes this media coverage can be a vital link between the day-to-day grind of the training and racing

and allowing friends and family back home keep track of race results and gain an insight into the hurricane you have willingly hurled yourself into. The newspaper articles, radio interviews and television appearances was valuable proof that your major racing successes such as victories, personal bests or national qualification were not the victories enjoyed by just you, the coach and immediate team mates, but success which the entire university and wider community wanted to share in as well.

I hope this newsletter provides similar evidence to each club member. Evidence that we are a community club, one which recognises the hard work training requires and the sacrifices needed, or plans rearranged to toe the line in a Kent AC vest. We share in each other's success and can benefit from the vast pool of internal knowledge to benefit our race results.

The exciting news is that following a phenomenal year for the club, this newsletter has been a dream to put together. On the roads, on the track and through the mud there has been success. Read on for race reports.

There is also comment from Stuart Beaney on our chances come February in the Surrey League following a couple of bruising autumn battles. As we enter championship season over the mud, there is advice in how to warm up for races from professional running coach Lawrence Avery. We also chat with GB international Amy Clements on her training and long-term targets.

But first, dates for your diary and notices! Yay, notices.

Club Notices

Club Celebration Party and Presentation

Saturday 5th January 2019 5:30pm start: *(Postpone dry January (unless you're racing in the Surrey League!))*

Venue: Blackheath Wanderers, 63 Eltham Rd, SE12 8UF, <http://www.bwsc.co.uk/>

Recognising the club's great success, huge support from its diverse membership base and achievements across the board, it's been decided to really celebrate in a true **party style**! So come along to this new and exciting party all in your honour. During the **free** event, presentations will be made across the board whether you've raced a major championship, set a PB or achieved a new goal, it could be you. Come along and find out! **Food provided.**

Club Rankings

Everyone wants to know what the club's top seven 110 hurdles performances were in 2011. Or, which vets' superstar was bottom of the club's 2017 pole vault rankings?

Now, you can easily find out here, on the new club rankings lists:

<https://www.kentac.org.uk/about-us/club-rankings/>

Check it out, it really is excellent.

Ladywell 10000

The second Ladywell 10,000 lived up to expectations this year as the club all pulled together to put on another fantastic event. In contrast to the first edition, the sun shined brightly and the warm conditions meant the water station got plenty of use. Competitors all praised the event for its slick organisation, competitive racing and the welcoming atmosphere.

The event is a key fundraiser for the club and raised over £1,700 for the club.

The 2019 event is provisionally scheduled for Sunday 1st September. Like previous events, many hands make light work, so look out for a call to arms after the cross-country season to get involved in making the event a big success. The ambition of the event is to continue to support all standards of runners by hosting multiple races at increasing pace groups.

Membership Report

Following a surge of membership growth in the last few years, a report was commissioned by the Club Committee to investigate the implications of this growth on the club's infrastructure, funding structure, coaching set-up and impact on training sessions.

Following the report's internal October publication to members, the central committee decided that a sub-committee should be formed to implement the report's key findings.

A call for members resulted in an eleven-person sub-committee which reflects the range of talent, involvement and ambitions of the club. The sub-committee will meet regularly until December 2019, and its activities will be reported in future newsletters.

Cross Country

Surrey Cross Country League – Match 1

Team Results: Teams: 1. HW 183 2. Kent 213 3. THH 347 4. G&G 385

MEN'S SURREY CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE, DIV 1, RICHMOND PARK 13 OCT 2018 PHIL SESEMANN CLAIMS VICTORY IN THE OPENING FIXTURE WHILE THE TEAM COME HOME IN SECOND

The eagerly anticipated first fixture of this seasons Surrey Cross Country League was held at Richmond Park Saturday 13th October. Aside from the editor used to Oklahoma and Kansas golf courses, it was probably the highest temperatures the majority of races had experienced for a cross country race. Temperature readings registered well over 20C, and without a drop of rain for weeks, racing spikes were a bold choice, with flats preferred for many. The course, which was dry in the extreme, was slightly different to the one most of us were used to.

Spectators were treated to an excellent race which after the opening jousts developed into a contest between our second claimer, Phil Sesemann, and Belgrave's international, Nick Goolab. In the early stages the pair had been amongst a little group who had got away from the main field. But the pair showed their class when they injected a burst of pace that no one else could live with. Phil had shown early season form at the road relays, and used his racing experience to drop the Belgrave man on the long finishing straight. He was five seconds ahead at the finish.

We then had three other runners in the first ten. Tom Mower, possibly having his best race over the country for us came in fifth, just a couple of seconds down on the legend that is Paskar Owor. Tom was followed closely in by Owen Hind (6th), and Max Nicholls (7th). Max is most at home in deep mud, or steep slopes

meaning this bone dry flatish course wouldn't be his first choice, but yet again he delivered the goods with a top ten finish.

So, we had to be pleased with four in the top ten. However, as we know, Hercules have strength in depth and so it proved on the day. Our scorers were quite spaced out and we had to wait until 52 to close in. Hercules, however, had seven in the first 20 of the field and then two more under 30. As a result, they go into the next fixture with a 30 points cushion.

Our fifth scorer was Chris Greenwood (17th) who managed a top twenty placing despite having to nurse an injury for most of the race. Chris reported that he felt a sharp pain and had to really back off in order to ensure finishing. Just outside the top twenty was Noah Armitage Hookes (21st) Noah has been settling in to life at Birmingham University and whilst he may have been running a good few miles, he's also been doing what freshers do – namely enjoying himself. So just outside the top twenty in such a competitive field was good going. Noah seemed to start quite conservatively but came through strongly in the second half of the race. The next man home always adds colour to these races. I wondered if he would do his trade mark start as on the road and track Dame Dibaba had been a bit more circumspect of late. However, just as in most races last year he charged off in to the lead which he held fleetingly. Whilst dropping down the field he rallied as he usually does and

finished (25th) That's strong running but you do wonder if slightly amended tactics might yield greater rewards? Anyway, we all enjoy his starts. Anthony Johnson had a prolonged spell of injury, but more recently has built that all important consistency and begun demonstrating the undoubted talented he possesses. Not a lover of cross country the hard going probably suited him. Anthony came in (30th) and you just need to look at the runners around him to see the potential he has if he can keep the niggles at bay. Pete Lighting (49th) often starts conservatively and moves through. However, on Saturday this tactic seemed even more pronounced. It may have been down to his trip to altitude. Towards the end of the race he was really moving through. He just looked as though he needed the race to go on for another five miles. Closing the team in was the mercurial Neil Phillips (52nd). It sounds as though he's putting in the miles for the forthcoming Frankfurt marathon and so it will be interesting to see how that one turns out.

In the B team stakes we were second to Hercules again. Here, though, the gap is a very narrow one. As per usual there is plenty of rivalry developing amongst the B team for bragging rights. Tim Lawrence was first B team scorer and he'll clearly be a marked man in the next three fixtures.

A race summary in four pictures...



WOMEN'S SURREY CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE, WIMBLEDON COMMON. Match One!

A somewhat depleted team competed in the first Surrey League fixture at Wimbledon Common on Saturday. For a variety of reasons there were quite a few absentees which meant the team weren't able to match some of the performances of last season. Nevertheless, there were some fine, battling runs from those who made up the team. Although hosted by Thames Hare and Hounds, the course on Wimbledon Common was essentially one used by Belgrave. In unseasonably warm conditions the course was bone dry which meant most runners felt they didn't need spikes.

With GB athlete Amy Clements absent, competing in a half marathon the following day as part of marathon preparations, our team was led home by

Alexa Parker who has been in fine form of late. She's run quickly in the recent relay races and her form continued here. Alexa was just outside the top 20, in 24th. Running strongly, and just outside the top fifty (51st) was Sarah Hanley. Our third runner home, not far behind Sarah, was Isabel Bradley (61st) Isabel looked as though she had sticky patch but seemed to recover well. The fourth scorer for the team, running a strong controlled race was Georgina Wiley. The five to score was completed by Sheryl Clark, who proved again that when necessary Kent AC women can muster a sprightly sprint finish. She ran well to finish inside the top one hundred (95th).

Although numbers were maybe a bit lower than some of the fixtures last year, we still had a scoring B team who competed well. In addition, we had four other runners who contributed to the Kent AC cause.



All photos downloaded from www.nigelbramley.com

TALENTED ALEX YEE SHOWS HIS CLASS BUT IN THE TEAM STAKES HW ARE SETTING THE PACE

Team result: H/W 148; 2 Kent AC 259; 3 THH 371; 4 GG 438; 5 SLH 462; 6 HHH 493; 7 Bel 525; 8 Ran 568; 9 SOC 831.

On an afternoon of torrential, unrelenting rain on Wimbledon Common, Kent AC's major bright spot from the second fixture was the tremendous performance of Alex Yee. Alex really showed what a class act he is, soon to the fore in a frantic start, then building a considerable lead that he was to hold for the entire race. In the early stages a chasing pack tried to bridge the gap, most notably Belgrave's Nick Goolab, but it was to no avail. Alex strode majestically to a very comfortable victory. However, running a carefully controlled race it was our own Owen Hind who won the race for second in convincing fashion. And whilst I've said that Alex's run was the bright spot for the club, Owen's run also deserves considerable praise. The word from Ken, and the training group, was that Owen was going well and, on the day, he certainly provided ample proof of that.

In the team stakes we again had to give best to Hercules Wimbledon and, on this occasion, the margin was considerably more than the first fixture. Their packing in this fixture was even better than it had been at Richmond. After the outstanding runs from Alex and Owen, we had to wait until Ross Braden came home in (18th). Ross was making his debut for us as a second claimer and it was an impressive one. Ross regularly trains at Ladywell so knows our guys well. It was undoubtedly a good run, but it seems it could have been even better. He turned his ankle close to home and that meant losing a few places in the run in. Then not far behind Ross was another 2nd claimer, Chris McGuirk. Chris has been running well in our colours for a number of seasons, but partly because we've often had big hitters representing

us, Chris has sometimes just missed out. However, here, his strong run put him ahead of some very good runners. A bit down from the heights of his Richmond run, Tom Mower was fifth scorer in (25th) Maybe it just wasn't Tom's day. Virtually coming in with Tom was Chris Greenwood (26th). He'd been hampered by a nagging injury at Richmond but felt things had gone better for him in this highly competitive field.



Yee: A late addition to the team-sheet, and without spikes until 2:55pm!

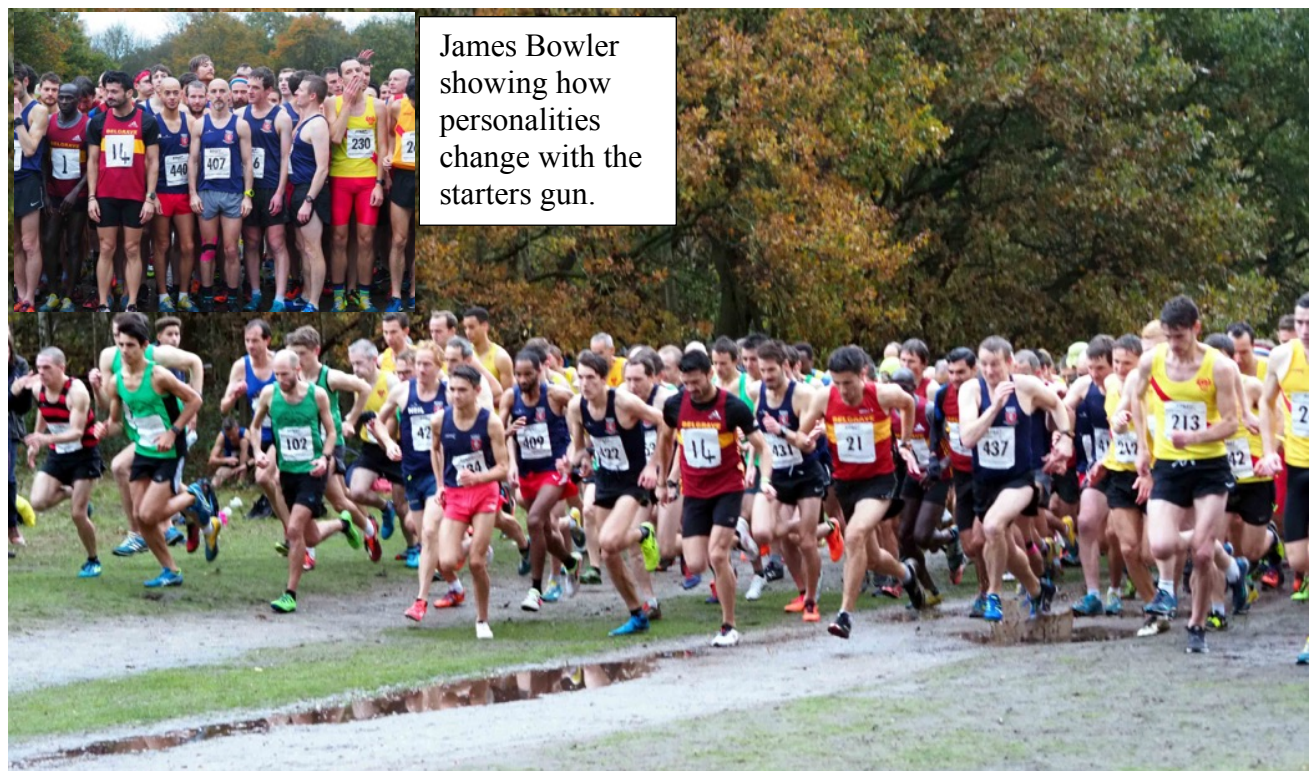
Just behind Chris was our regular second claimer Nick Torry. Today, with Chris McGuirk running so well, Nick didn't score for us – a rare event. However, as the father of young twins he's maybe not running the miles he was, but more particularly with the rain and poor visibility the course must have been a nightmare for him. As most people will know, Nick normally wears a serious pair of specs but in the dreadful conditions they couldn't be worn.

Our next scorer after Chris Greenwood was Jordan Weaver in (29th) Whilst inside

the top thirty in this field is good going, on the basis of some of his PB's on the track this summer it might have been anticipated that he would have perhaps been a little higher. However, he hasn't raced for quite a while and with a few more races behind him it wouldn't be a surprise if he's a fair few places higher at the next fixture. On the eve of the race Stuart Beaney paid tribute to John Gilbert and how much his presence means to those running with him. I won't spare his blushes here either. Initially people might think – 34th John Gilbert what happened. But this has to be seen very much in context. When you consider he is some way off fitness and running with an injury it again shows the character of the guy – it speaks volumes that he's prepared to do this. Just squeezing inside fifty was Dame (49th) who of course featured right at the front in the early stages. Closing the team in,

having a much better run than at Richmond was track man, Ben Harding (54th).

Another big plus point from this race was the run of debutant, Alex Dudney. A youngster by Kent AC standards, Alex is a product of the Bromley Parkrun. As we know a few diamonds have been unearthed by Parkrun, and Alex looks as though he may have the potential to be another. He finished amongst some very good club runners. I've mentioned John's sterling effort, but another to go above and beyond the call of duty was Dan Ansell. Dan's had an issue that warranted a spell in hospital recently. As a result, he's had to wear splints on his arms which he had to wear in the race. It would be bad enough to run on a flat service, but in the brutal conditions! – much respect Dan.



WOMEN'S SURREY LEAGUE, DIVISION 1, SECOND FIXTURE, NONSUCH PARK NOV 10, 2018

Between the deluge the night before and the torrential rain in the afternoon for the men's race the women enjoyed a surprisingly sunny morning for round two of the Surrey League at Nonsuch Park on November 10th. The course was 2 laps accounting for just over 6k around the park. It was muddy in patches with a few opportunities to practice jumping across ditches!

There were unfortunately a few Kent drop outs during the race due to illness (thankfully no injuries!). 245 women overall completed the race. Scoring for the Kent A team were Katie Rowland with a fantastic 12th place in a high-quality field (including Mara Yamauchi who finished

in 14th). Following on from her was Isabel Bradley (31st) who is having a great start to the season, always quality performer Sarah Hanley (43rd), Georgina Wiley (64th) and Laura McCrave (74th) in her first XC race of the season and enjoying some great fitness.

After the second round and only halfway the Kent A team are sitting 12th on the ladder with a total of 305 points. The Women's B team is sitting in 26th position with 720 points.

To echo the men's congratulations a big one as well to Teresa Murphy who ran 3.02.07 at New York coming in 98th overall and 3rd United Kingdom runner.

The Men's Chances, A Rallying Cry. Stuart Beany ponders our chances:

We have to believe we can still win the Surrey League. There is a huge amount of work to do to close the 141-point gap. But, BUT, if we pull together and each of you gets the most from your training in the next ten weeks, and then importantly be ready to hurt for 28 minutes come game day, we can turn the deficit around. Step One is we simply all have to believe, next, we all have to be available and 100 per cent committed to achieving that belief. That comes from putting in the training miles each day, saying no to those 'just one more?' beers and coming to Ladywell each Tuesday.

Wimbledon Common in November was a freak result. The conditions were astonishingly bad, and rightly or wrongly, as a collective we were not prepared for such extreme conditions underfoot. Wimbledon took advantage of this, and the fact they were on home turf, and buoyed

by their first fixture win, closed in an unprecedented 28 places. There is no escaping that they wanted a result to turn heads and they achieved it. However, and I am not going to name names as I don't want to pressurise individuals, but several were coming back from injury, and several more underperformed on the day. The result was an anomaly in many respects and well over 100 points could be accounted for.

The positive news is that as a club we tend to perform better after Christmas. In the second half of the league last year we scored 207 fewer points compared to the first two fixtures, and we placed six runners in the top 40 at Southern.

The year before that we overturned a 144-point deficit from the first fixture by carving out two sizeable wins and closing in 42 and 35 respectably.

I remember when we first won the title in 2013 after the long march through the lower leagues. There was a mammoth gap to pull back from THH on the final match and we did it with a similar mix of international quality stars and dedicated club legionary's that we have in the

current squad. These results were no accident and achieved by turning up each Tuesday to put in the miles regardless of circumstances. We have to want to win, and we have to demonstrate we want to win.

South of Thames 5miles 2018 Morden: Kent AC men are second team, but women just miss out on third

27th November 2018

Kent AC's men and men and women journeyed to the end of the Northern Line to Morden on Saturday to compete in the South of the Thames five-mile team race. This fixture is always an enjoyable one as it sees our men and women running in the same race together.

Within the race there are sperate men's and women's races and there was success again for our men as they claimed second team spot. The race, which used to be known as the South of the Thames Junior race, has a considerable history to it. For much of its history, including the days when the Kent AC old guard were in their prime, the race had barring clauses. It meant if you had finished at a high level in certain races, or you finished high up one year in the actual race, you couldn't take part subsequently. The format was altered some while back and the change that saw men and women running together came about in 2001. Unfortunately, this year our women missed out on taking third place in their race by the narrowest of margins – just one point separated them from South London who took third place. Similarly, Katy Rowlands, just missed out on a medal coming home fourth. However, it was another race where Katy showed her undoubted potential. She wasn't afraid to go out hard and for the first lap she was in touch with the eventual race winner. Whilst she dropped back a bit it was still a very strong run for someone relatively new to competition.

Although there were several of the regular Surrey League men missing, we nevertheless looked as though we had the makings of a decent team in the four to score – and so it proved. Our team of Jordan Weaver (7th), Ben Harding (12th), Dame Dibaba (13th) and Dave Morgan (18th) got the better of some pretty decent teams. They packed well but couldn't match a Guildford team who are definitely on the up. The comfortable winner of the race was Belgrave's Phil Wicks. Our guys were initially just a little way off a group that was forlornly chasing Wicks. However, they moved up places on the final lap – all managing strong finishes.

The most notable finish being Jordan's. He really blitzed it over the last three hundred meters, passing a couple who tried to respond, but were unable to resist his charge. If the team competition had extended to eight to score, it would have been interesting as I think here, we would have come out on top.

Our next four men home were Pete Lighting (25th), followed closely by Calum Fraser (26th), Neil Phillips(43rd) and close up, Lee Haze(44th). It was an encouraging run from Lee, as it was for Ben McGeown who managed a top fifty finish coming home (47th) In total I believe we had 16 men compete which wasn't a bad turn out when you consider the number of fixtures coming up.

As mentioned, our women came tantalizingly close to the third-place medals. After Katy's fine fourth place in the race, our next three scorers that saw us come so close were: Georgina Wiley (12th), Eliza Grant (23rd) and Claire Sutton (26th). In addition, we had also had a 'B' team who were eighth team. Sarah

Dowling was (31st) then came Zuzana Nemekova (36th) followed by Susie Fairbrass (49th) and Sarah Young (53rd). A very encouraging performance – especially when you consider this was achieved without some of our women who are normally at the sharp end of proceedings.



Ben Harding returning to form as winter miles accumulate



Jordan Weaver perhaps wondering whether his return from injury could have been delayed a day?



All smiles before, during and after!

South of the Thames 7.5-mile Championships, Beckenham Place Park, Dec 15, 2018

Kent AC men show their strength in depth with third place in the six to score and also land the Coleman cup for 12 to score.

On the entry forms we looked to have a very strong team – perhaps even one capable of winning the race like we did in 2016 when the Championship was previously held at Beckenham. However, as sometimes happens, injuries and unavailability mean the team that actually lines up comes some way short of the one on the entry form. And this was the case on Saturday at a bitterly cold, rainy Beckenham Place Park. However, although we were missing a fair few of the names listed, the runners we had out performed extremely well. Not only did they nab bronze medals in the six to score, they also demonstrated the club's strength in depth by winning the 12 to score.

The conditions experienced at the last Surrey league were challenging with the remorseless rain, but on Saturday runners had to contend with a nasty chill factor in addition to rain.

Beckenham Place Park is currently undergoing some major landscaping work which meant that large swathes of the park were unavailable for those setting up the course. With this being the case, it just shows how much land there is in the park now the former golf course has become available to use. At the start of the race spectators were slightly puzzled as the route the runners were taking didn't seem to quite tally with the one on the course map. In the event, though, it appeared the lead runners worked out where they needed to go.

Although he didn't set off at a blistering pace, Dame Dibaba was just behind the lead group in the early stages and he more or less stayed behind the lead group for most of the race. Mid race he was probably a few places higher, but his

17th finish must still count as a very strong run. In the latter stages Dame was having a bit of a duel with Belgrave's Paskar Owor. He lost out to Paskar who in the tough conditions would have definitely won a prize for best protected against the elements. Paskar does not appear to be a fan of the cold weather and the gear he was sporting amply proved this point. Our second finisher was Ben Harding (22nd) who had also ran well in the 5 mile South of the Thames race at Morden. Ben finished with a flourish, just getting the better of Herne Hill's, Mike Cummings on the run in. Next man in was Pete Lighting (28th), who in the company of Sean Fitzpatrick, had such a tremendous New York Marathon. I think Pete would concede that his talents are perhaps better suited to the road. However, on certain cross-country courses he really shows up well. In this race his staying power proved important to the teams cause. Our fourth scorer was Rob Laing (35th) who ran so well at Dartford a fortnight ago when he was the runner up in the County Vets. Rob ran strongly in the closing stages and overtook our fifth scorer, Alex Dudney (39th). I commented that Alex had a really impressive debut for us after the Wimbledon race. Here again he showed that he obviously has lots of potential. Closing in fast on Alex was James Bowler (40th), our sixth and crucial scorer. Also running well and ensuring we won the 12 to score were the likes of the returning, Lawrence Avery, high mileage man, Sam Evans and Phil Sanders.

Interestingly in the six to score team race we actually had the same points (181) as Herne Hill. Post -race it looked to the organizers that Herne Hill had claimed third spot. However, using the formula about the last scorer deciding it in the event of a tie, it proved to be us that have

actually been awarded third spot. Although close calls in the scoring are not unusual, to have equal scores is probably not that common. And of course, we wouldn't begrudge our friends and neighbours a little bit of shared glory.

So whilst some of us were worried about how a team without the big guns would fare, it turned out a somewhat depleted team did the club proud – just the boost we needed going into a tough run of fixtures in the new year.

In the women's race a 13-strong contingent battled the Baltic conditions and the A team performed strongly (6 to score) to come home in third position behind Belgrave H and Tonbridge AC. On a wet, windy, cold and muddy day (XC conditions at its best!) Amy Clements (overall winner at the recent Kent Vets Champs in Dartford) was 3rd over the line.

Second scorer was Katie Rowland (11th) who has had significant success with a number of PBs on the road and track this year and who has been enjoying a successful XC season. Third scorer was Teresa Murphy (17th) in her first race back since coming 98th overall at the recent New York City marathon in a time of 3.02.07 followed by always consistent performer Sarah Hanley in 19th position (who has also enjoyed a recent 10k road PB at the Abbey Dash a few weeks ago), Georgina Wiley (21st) and Ali Farrell (27th) who came 12th overall and 3rd in the V45 age category at the Kent Vet champs. Teresa was awarded 1st for the V40 category.

Bringing in the B team (who came 7th overall) was Cath Stibbs (36), Joanne Campbell (43), Sarah Dowling (44), Claire Sutton (55), Kate Williams (59) and Susie Fairbrass (71) with Heather Castle rounding out the Kent AC women's team.

Team (6 to score)

Men's

1. Brighton & H 75; 2. Tonbridge 129; 3. Kent AC 181 Herne Hill 181

Women's

1. Belgrave H 68, 2. Tonbridge AC (78), 3. Kent AC (98)

Coleman Cup (12 to score)

1. Kent AC 503; 2. Herne Hill 625; 3. Dulwich 1078

Warm Ups

For years, my warm up for almost all races consisted of 1-2 miles of slow jogging, a couple of half-hearted and pretty slow strides, a few nervous chats with clubmates and then a walk down to the start. Once the gun went I usually would feel terrible and be gasping for breath within seconds, as others roared past me. In some races you can afford a slow start, but in others, especially cross country championship races like the Counties, Southern or the National where position is everything from the first step until the last, a poor warm up and consequently a poor start can cost you your race before you've barely got going.

So why is a warm up important and what should you do? A warm up loosens your muscles (meaning they can contract more quickly), increases your body temperature (hence the name) and raises your heart rate. Mentally, it primes your body that it's time to race, and research also shows that it can also help protect against injury. Slow jogging and strides are important elements of a good warm up, but there is so much more to consider when warming up including timing, quantity, and specific demands of the race.

So how do you warm up properly, and ensure you are primed to make a fast start. Here are my 4 tips:

1. Be specific. The kind of warm up you are doing depends on your race and there is no one correct way to warm up. For shorter races, requiring a fast start like a 5km, you'll need a more intense warm up. This could include 15-20 mins of jogging, followed by 4-6 x 100m strides (with 1 minute walking recovery) at which you gradually increase your pace so 15 minutes before your event, your legs and mind are in the pace zone. Add in dynamic stretching and drills like 10 x

forward and sideways lunges and 10 x leg and hip swings are good stretches to use. Drills like high knees, butt kicks and skips are also effective. But, come the spring marathons, energy conservation is the name of the game. Therefore your warm up should be shorter and less intense. 5-10 mins of slow jogging is sufficient for me, then it's to the STARTERS PEN.

2. Don't warm up too early. Timing is key, if you warm up an hour before the race you'll have lost the benefits by start time. Although you may be limited by space in race pens, delay your warm up until as late as practically possible. If your heart rate has dropped too low by the time of the start, it will be a real shock when you start to run hard. My recommendation during XC is to start your 20 minute jog 50 minutes before race time, that leaves plenty of time afterwards for spike length changes, de-layering, disappear into a bush and finding a dry(ish) area to leave your bag.

3. Have a routine: Pre-race can be stressful and it can be easy to be consumed by doubt. One of the best ways to focus can be to go through your pre-set warm up routine. You'll need to practice it before (maybe at a track session) but if you have developed a set routine for races of a certain distance you can get it done without too much stress, and it's one less thing to worry about.

4. Don't do too much, and start warming up slowly: Don't go straight into strides, drills and dynamic stretches. You do need that jog first. And try to get the balance between priming your body to race and not tiring yourself out by doing too much. 4-6 strides and 10 minutes of drills is enough for me but you might need to experiment with quantities to see what best works for you.

Road Running

Southern Six Stage Relay 2018 Crystal Palace: COMFORTABLE QUALIFICATION FOR SENIOR TEAMS WHILE M40's WIN AGAIN AND W40'S TAKE BRONZE

For the second year running the South of England Relay championships took place at Crystal Palace with the start and finish on the athletics track of the iconic old stadium.

There was a big contingent of Kent AC runners at the championships – with the senior men turning out four teams. There was success again for our V40 men who have a fantastic record in this competition. They were winners again for the fifth time in row. Plaudits must also go to our women who had a very good day. The V40 women actually took bronze medals in a very competitive race. In addition, our senior women finished a highly creditable fifteenth in their race and an in-form Amy Clements ran the third fastest time of the day.

In the senior men's race our men came in fourteenth with the B team putting in a very strong showing coming home 19th. And when you consider there were 78 teams closed in, the 41st position of our C team further indicates our strength in depth. There were also a fair few teams behind our D team. Although our A team was pretty strong as originally hoped. On the day, though, the performance of some of our rivals certainly gave us food for thought. Clearly some teams have got a large pool of talent. In the senior men's race, James Connor, unusually for him, ran the opening leg. He showed he's in form by bringing us home in thirteenth. We did drop back a few places, but on the fifth leg Tom Mower overtook several to bring us back to fourteenth. Jordan Weaver on last leg closed the team in on fourteenth, finishing things off with a very impressive sprint as he came onto the track.



Pete Boxshall: Ever the club man

Finishing in fifteenth spot our senior women comfortably qualified for the national relays. As mentioned, Amy Clements, who ran the first leg, continued her good run of form and ran strongly to post the third fastest of the day. Her three team mates all ran well though with Alexa Parker, posting a swift time on leg 2. Big congratulations must go to our V40 women who came in third and so claimed bronze medals. All the team ran well but perhaps special mention should go to Teresa Murphy who anchored the team. She took over in fifth spot and her excellent run brought the team up into third place. The V40 men yet again claimed victory and it's quite a streak for them. Barring injuries I wouldn't be surprised if they can continue the streak. Rob Laing ran a very strong first leg and was just a fraction away from handing over in the lead. Phil Sanders kept them in second before Che Compton swept the team into the lead. By the time Chris Greenwood took over on the last leg he had a considerable advantage. However, he showed his class by running the fastest lap which was like a time trial for him. Showing impressive powers of recovery this run followed only a week after Chris had run 2:28 at the Berlin marathon!

National 6 Stage Road Relay 2018

6th October 2018

Despite a few hiccups on the Friday beforehand where we lost Alex Yee through illness and James Connor, we had two full teams. A special thanks here to Tim Lawrence and Neil Phillips who answered the late call making themselves available for the B team, demonstrating that our team ethic is second to none.

We were fielding 3 teams in total as we had a Women's team for the second year running and the weather held up for us as we avoided the predicted downpour. Our man from Snowdon led off first and Russell Bentley used all his knowledge to run solidly to come home in 33rd position in a time of 18 min 13 secs to set us up nicely. Next up was Anthony Johnson who delivered the goods, despite only being moved into the A team at the last minute, yet he more than proved his worth as he gained two places with a time of 18 min 26 secs to demonstrate that he is on the road to his best form.

Then Owen Hind took off and looked very elegant as he surged through the field and gained 13 places place to come home in 18th place as he demonstrated that he is making inroads on his fitness. He handed over to another of our guys who had the late call for the A team, Jordan Weaver, and he ran well to record a time of 18 min 13 secs and hand over in 17th to demonstrate that he is returning to fitness. Then one of our newer guys took off and Tom Mower ran very solidly, also looking good, despite not being fully fit yet to record a time of 18 min 31 seconds and he handed over in 16th position to our club stalwart Chris Greenwood who was running the last leg. He had a solid run despite not feeling at his best and held our final position of 17th in a time of 18 min 46 secs in a field of 81 teams – all of whom had qualified through the area relays.

Despite not having a fully fit team for a number of reasons, the team were rewarded with an overall time of 1 hour, 50 min and 7 secs, which was only 1 second slower than our best ever time!

Our B team also performed well on the day as first James Bowler led them off and used all of his knowhow to record a time of 19min 16 secs despite this first leg being highly competitive. Then Ben Harding gained four positions with a time of 19 min 31 secs and he handed over to Dame Dibaba on leg 3 in 61st position. Dame then had a good run as he tore off and quickly caught five runners to finish with a time of 19min 20 secs in 56th position. We then had another much-improved athlete, Joe Hartley, who had recorded a time of 15 min 18 secs for a 5000 m in August, who ran well as he took another two runners in a time of 19 min 9 secs. Next up was Tim Lawrence who had only found out he was running a day beforehand, yet he stuck to the task in hand to gain three places in a time of 19 min 46 secs. Lastly, we had our other late recruit Neil Phillips who ran solidly in a time of 20 min 42 secs and finish our B teams schedule.

So, despite our problem the day beforehand the B team finished in 53rd position and were rewarded with the fact that they were the 9th ranked B team in GB on the day.

Marathons

Kent AC has a strong marathon running tradition with significant performances being laid down each year by our members. With the marquee domestic marathons tending to fall in the spring months, running an autumn marathon requires greater preparation for entry requirements and travel arrangements. Reports from the Berlin and New York Marathons come in the form of members' blogs. If you don't already, I urge you to follow Russel Bentley and Lawrence Avery for outstanding regular content on their respective running journeys.

Early mentions of this section must go to Teresa Murphy who ran a six-minute pb for 3:02.07 in New York, and Stuart Beany who rolled back the years in Frankfurt to record a 30 second pb for a 2:38.07. Every second gained no doubt earned with 100s of training miles. Amy Clements showed that form is primarily in the head with 2:39.50 at Frankfurt marathon, a mere 40 seconds off her pb despite a disrupted summer build up. Read on for her thoughts on her marathon training.

Berlin Marathon

Russell Bentley: www.russellrunner.com



It is 7am on a Sunday morning. The Underground trains would usually be empty at this early hour. Today they are packed. The biggest annual event to hit Berlin has arrived, the Berlin Marathon. There is the smell of excitement in the air, nerves, deep heat, anticipation. Runners make small talk quietly, nervously trying to reassure each other (and themselves). When I walk onto the train, people stop talking. Everywhere my gaze falls, people are trying not to stare at me, and failing.

I am 5ft7, 9st10 and 37 years old. Not particularly impressive stats in any other walk of life. But, right now, in the midst of hundreds of marathon runners, I

look like an elite marathon runner. I am in the best shape of my life; my cheekbones are protruding; my muscles are ripped, and I am wearing box fresh tracksuit and trainers from my sponsors. More than all this, I am exuding confidence. I turn on my headphones, I am calm, focused and ready. Think, demi-God.

Every time I catch someone's eye, they instantly look away. And every time that happens, I grow an inch. I look like a guy who can run a marathon really fast, like way faster than everyone else here. I am intimidating. When we exit the train, the crowd give me a wide berth. They all turn right, to join the 40,000 others on the

mass start. I turn left, to join Eliud Kipchoge and the elite field of less than 100 athletes.

Eight hours later. I get back to the same underground station. The train is full of glowing, happy, joyous runners. People from all over the world are talking, laughing, sharing stories; punctuated with high fives, and selfies. Everyone, without fail, proudly displaying their well-earned Berlin medals. I am not exuding confidence any more. I cannot find a seat, but I NEED to sit down, so I crumple pathetically on the floor. Everyone is still giving me a wide birth, but not because they are intimidated.

I am bent over my aching stomach. I am pale, gaunt, have lost 11lbs in fluids. Worse, I stink. Flies are circling around me. I didn't even know there were flies on the Underground. I look up and appreciate how much this scene has changed from the one I observed this very morning. I have gone from ethereal presence, to embarrassment. If anyone is unlucky enough to catch my eye, they look away, slightly disgusted. I have a little laugh, but it hurts my tummy.

I think to myself; what the f&*(just happened?....

I wake up Sunday morning, 6am, having slept deeply. I have had a really vivid dream about running 2.18 in Berlin. So, it takes me a while to realise that I haven't done it yet. When the reality sets in, that I have still to actually go and do it, I am excited, rather than deflated.

I jump out of bed and do all the routine stuff. When I get to the elite tent, I am feeling much more at home, having done it all before a year ago. Eliud Kipchoge is there, looking super-human, but I knew he would be, it doesn't come as a surprise. My warm up goes as well as it possibly could go. Just feel totally ready to

go. A guy, Rob Murphy, stops me to shake my hand and say he reads my blog, that feels really nice. I talk briefly with Patrick Sang, Eliud's coach, who I have met several times in Iten, Kenya. My Kiswahili is pretty damn good.

20min before race starts, it is time to take on some caffeine. I have avoided it for a week, and now I have a high caffeine drink at my lips. I think to myself, do I need this? I am so focused and zoned in right now. I down it anyway, can't hurt.

They play the same Shakira song as last year (Try Everything) on the start line. My plan is to start at around 5.15miling, and see what kind of company I can work with.

As we get going, I am relaxed but ready. The weather is beautiful, the crowds are great. I am holding myself back. I feel like I am running on carpet, it is so soft and easy. I am pretty bang on pace for the first 3 miles. There isn't a great deal of help around me, but I am happy to clip along on my own.

I hear loud cheers coming from behind, I look back and there is a mass of vehicles and runners approaching, led by Tirunesh Dibaba and her pacemakers. This big group of runners is acting like Jupiter, sucking up all the meteorites around. The noise and influence of this group means the runners slightly ahead or behind all end up running together. There could be 30 of us in here. With Dibaba and her pacer at the head. The group is so big there are inevitable clashes and trips. I say to myself, 'this is my family now', 'this is where I live'. I get familiar with my new reality quickly.

In my build up, I had often visualised myself running with Dibaba, one of my top 3 favourite female athletes of all time (next to Allyson Felix and Kelly Holmes). But then I heard she might

have a crack at Paula Radcliffe's record, 2.15, too quick for me. The pacer car is displaying estimated finish time of 2.18, which suits me fine. The pacemaker is rubbish, going from 5.18 one mile to 4.56 the next, but nothing phases me. After very little drama, all of a sudden I am at 10 miles, I let myself smile. This is going to happen. One mile at a time. I am going to do this.

Just after 12 miles, I get my first stomach cramp. It goes from slight discomfort to pain very quickly. I am falling off the back of the group. I don't panic, there is still a long way to go, this could just be a bad patch. We get through halfway in 69.29. It is OK, I was hoping for slightly faster, but right now I have bigger problems. I can still run, but I'm not flowing anymore.

Then things start to get messy. I don't need to go into detail here, I'm sure you know what I mean.

I have made some massive errors. And now I am paying for them quite dramatically. Hindsight is always 20-20. I have created a perfect storm by not listening to my own advice. Keep things simple, don't change anything, take care of business.

- Doing a carb-deplete, then three-day carb-load is a risky strategy, especially for someone who generally eats very little carbs anyway
- Coming back onto caffeine when very sensitive to it can over-stimulate the intestines
- Making a late decision to change shorts, which have no pockets, so have to shove gels in waistband, then tie VERY tight to prevent them slipping.

There is an actual thing called Tight Pants Syndrome, which can cause unwanted bowel movements

I had not been doing any of these things in my training. I did 7 long runs in this Berlin buildup, with zero toilet stops. I don't have a weak stomach. I have just tried to be extra, find some small advantage, when the training was advantage enough.

I pass Scott Overall at around mile 15, he has just dropped out, I try and encourage him to jump back in. He tells me he is having 'stomach issues', I have to laugh as I point to my legs. He runs with me for a while, then steps off again shouting in frustration, some things I can't repeat, but are very funny.

It is just me and the long road home. I am getting slower, I am a mess, there is nowhere to hide.

I am forced to stop at a portaloo somewhere around mile 18. It is full on diarrhea now. When all of this is coming out of me, there is no way I can have enough energy stored inside me. It takes 3 minutes. Do you know how long 3 minutes feels like in the middle of a race? It is a lifetime. Sitting there, I have all the time in the world to contemplate the universe. I think about my family at home tracking me, what they must be thinking. I don't consider myself to be a vain person, I don't want to feel this pride and shame. But I do. What an idiot.

Coming out of that portaloo, and getting back out in-front of the crowds, is one of the harder things I have had to do. I have loosened my shorts but my stomach is still killing me. Thankfully, my kids are always enough. They are more important than a million spectators I have never met. I promised my little girl a medal. It is the same medal Kipchoge and every other finisher gets. I just need to finish.

I stop to go to the toilet again 3 miles later. I then need to stop again, but I will never bloody finish at this rate. People are flying past me, some friends offer words of

encouragement. In the final mile I realise if I get my shit together (pun kindof intended) I can still finish in under 2hrs30. Well, if you are going through hell, keep going. I change gear, ignore my tummy, and really enjoy it in some sort of masochistic way.

As soon as I finish, the pain all comes flooding in. I have never been so proud of a medal in my life. There is a massive buzz in the elite area as Kipchoge has smashed the world record. I just want to get out of there.

I sponge down and go somewhere quiet to change out of smelly kit, it is all feeling remarkably similar to last year, but without that glowing elation of a personal best. John and Belal see me doubled over and come to console me, it means a lot.

I have to lie in the park for over an hour until my tummy stops hurting. I call Nina.

New York Marathon

Lawrence Avery: www.runyourbest.net

I'll get the moaning out of the way at the start. I understand it's a logistical challenge to organise a race across five boroughs and three separate land masses but I don't think New York Marathon is providing value for money given the race costs \$350. Last time I ran here I had such a nightmare journey to the start I had to start in a slower and later wave as they wouldn't let me in to my allocated wave despite me being 30 mins before the start. Scarred by that experience, this time I decided to err on the side of caution and book a ferry at 6.15 am to get me there in plenty of time for the 950 start. The total journey took supposedly 90 minutes but we didn't actually get to the start until 845. The ferry itself was ok, but we then were put on a bus that took over 90 minutes to progress a couple of miles to the start. We were completely stationary for about 30 minutes and despite at that

She has tried to explain to my kids that I might not be entirely happy with my race. But it falls on deaf ears to them. I got them a medal and I will always be their daddy.

My tummy prevented me from hammering my legs, so the next morning I go for 3 miles easy, because I feel like it. I spend the day sunbathing and trying to respond to all the kind messages from everyone. I have got so many I can't reply to all of them. But I am so grateful to everyone for the support.

Of-course there is immense disappointment. Throwing away such a fantastic opportunity. If this were a half marathon, none of these problems would have arisen. But the marathon is littered with stories just like mine. The marathon is humbling. And my lesson came relatively cheap. I have walked away without any lasting damage. I will be back

point being only a few hundred yards from the start we were stopped from getting off the bus and walking for 'insurance reasons.'



The calm before the storm – the Expo

We finally made it to the starting pen, which was pretty cramped and didn't provide much space for a warm up. I chatted to a guy waiting for the loo and he said he was aiming for 3 hours 30 which seemed strange given we were in the fastest pen apart from the elites. When we

were marched up to the start line it soon became apparent there were A LOT of people in our starting wave, we (myself and clubmates Sean, Pete and JT were nowhere near the front). When the gun went off, it quickly became clear that we were behind a lot of much slower runners. The guy next to me was filming himself as he started to run, another two guys in front of me were having a leisurely conversation. I don't know exactly why these people were able to be so near to the front, someone suggested they may be volunteers or policemen but I'm not sure. Either way it made for a pretty dangerous start with faster runners trying to overtake slower ones and lots of frustrated people. I don't blame the slower people for being there, other than those like the filming guy who showed no respect for his fellow competitors. It should be for NYC marathon to make sure people are in the correct starts (I encountered this problem last time I ran New York – despite starting in the second wave, 30 mins behind the first one, I was catching people after only a few miles!). Anyway, to the race... The first few hundred meters were extremely frustrating as I tried to barge through tiny gaps without angering too many people. I was a little bit too polite though as I lost a lot of ground to my fellow Kent AC runners. I was ranting to myself about how ridiculous it was but I soon realised I had to calm down and get on with the race. It was a marathon after all and maybe the start cost me 20 secs maximum, less than one second a mile.

The first mile and a half of the race takes you over the Verrazano Bridge from Staten Island to Brooklyn. The bridge is surprisingly steep so I was expecting the first mile to be slow but it was a bit worrying when I passed the mile in 6.15, more than 30 secs slower than 230 marathon pace. The next mile was mostly downhill though so I made up some of the time with a 5.28. It usually takes me a few miles to relax at the start of the marathon

and this time was no different, with the stress of the start not helping.



On the tails of a Norweigan

I felt ok but no better for the first few miles in Brooklyn. I could see Pete's white cap ahead which reassured me that I was running ok if he wasn't too far ahead. The crowds in Brooklyn were plentiful and loud, no doubt brought out in force by the weather which was good for runners and spectators alike (the weather gods were much kinder to me than at this year's London Marathon – it was cool, sunny, and with light winds). I passed through 5k in 17.43, slightly outside of goal pace but ok considering the slow start.

About 3-4 miles in the race I started to feel quite good. I'd got in to my rhythm (not having properly warmed up it probably took me longer than normal) and was starting to pick off quite a lot of people. I was even closing in on Pete! I was determined not to pass him, my splits were now quicker than my expected marathon pace and I knew I could pay for being too bold at this stage and that Pete was a master at pacesetting. The next few miles were probably my best of the race, I had to keep telling myself to slow down. I passed 10k in 35 flat, now inside 230 pace.



JT at mile 16

I don't remember too much about the next 10k. I was pretty much in the zone by now and was shutting out most external sights and sounds. I tried to look at my watch as little as possible and just stay at around 50-100m behind Pete. I could tell the crowds remained big and loud however, apart from a bizarre part of Brooklyn where there was almost nobody apart from a few orthodox Jewish people walking around taking no interest in the race! I passed 20k in 1.10:08, if I could keep this pace it was going to be a very good day. I felt strong, and I'd taken on plenty of carbs in the forms of 3 gels and some Gatorade (though given it was delivered in plastic cups which were barely a third full I'm not sure I managed to swallow much!). Just before the half marathon point though, my hamstring dramatically tightened. I'd had a slight pain in the hamstring during the previous week but I'd thought nothing of it as I've had plenty of more serious injuries before marathons previously which have disappeared on race day (like my calf injury at this year's London Marathon). My first thought was SHIT, I'm going to DNF (Did Not Finish)! It didn't seem possible to run another half marathon with the injury. Panic set in and I started to consider the options open to me ...do I stop and stretch? How do I get back from here, I have no money, no subway card, no phone, and I can't remember Anna's phone number!?



Pete – the champion of SE26

I slowed down a bit and tried to alter my gait a little to see if I could reduce the pain and tightness. About this point I also passed through the half way point, I learned later that the clock said 74.03 but I didn't notice at the time such was my worry. I told myself to keep a conservative pace and see what happens. My pace didn't drop too much, and over the next few miles and the injury didn't get any worse, and possibly improved slightly. I still wasn't sure I'd finish, but in a strange way I think this took a bit of a pressure off me and I started to feel a bit more relaxed.

At around 16 miles, the race goes over the Queensboro Bridge from Queens to Manhattan. I tried to conserve energy on the bridge, not pushing too hard on the up hills. My pace dropped to around 6-minute miling. No spectators are allowed on the bridge so it's quite surreal to be in such an oasis of calm, with the only sounds your footsteps and breathing. That calm suddenly ends as you leave the bridge and run in to Manhattan. The crowds here were massive and deafening, I'm sure I put in a little surge here, it's hard not to. I knew Anna and her family were watching around here but sadly I didn't see them.



Sean on the way to a brilliant PB

I headed up 1st Avenue, cheered on by massive crowds. By this point I'd lost Pete, but there were a few other people to work with even though no groups really formed. I ran with a Norwegian guy for a bit who would eventually finish just ahead of me (though I beat him on chip time!). The next 4 miles up 1st Avenue were very solid, around 5.40 miling.

At around 20 miles, you pass in to the last borough of the race, the Bronx. I took my last gel and gritted my teeth as I knew this was a tough part of the race, a bit twisty and poorly spectated. My hamstring was also starting to get worse again after a few miles of relative pain free running. As I left the Bronx I passed teammate JT. It's always a weird one passing a friend in a race, I feel like I should say something, but I never know what. We did exchange a few words, but I can't really remember what.

I ran back into Manhattan on to 5th avenue, 5 miles to go. A bit of self-doubt was starting to creep in, and I tried to quell the internal chatter. 'My hamstring is too tight', 'you need to slow down or you'll hit the wall', 'nobody cares about your time just slow down a bit', etc. I still think I'm a bit mentally scarred from hitting the wall so badly in a couple of my early marathons and in hindsight I wish I'd been able to be a bit more

positive at this stage, but easier said than done.

I maintained a pretty solid pace though, with miles 22 and 23 passing in 544 and 548. I was still passing people and almost nobody was passing me (from memory) which definitely helped. Mile 24 was a big uphill drag towards Central Park and I slowed a little (557), but weirdly the uphill running seemed to help loosen my hamstring.



The park at last!!

I entered Central Park with about 2 miles to go. Finally, I started to relax. I wasn't going to hit the wall, I wasn't going to get cramp in my calves like pretty much all my previous marathons. I didn't exactly feel able to push on but I felt ok, relatively good in fact for 24 miles into a marathon. I did some math's in my head, I worked out I was on for a PB and might even have a chance of sub 229 with a fast 2 miles. Turns out my math's was a bit wrong, but anyway my next mile was a bit slower (548) despite it being downhill as my hamstring seemed to find downhill running harder than uphill. I got a big boost though when I saw Anna and her family at around 40k, I even gave Anna a high five as I passed her. The course levelled out for the last 1.2 miles and I felt stronger again. I kept telling myself, 'you're running the New York Marathon, take it in'. The finish line seemed to take forever to appear, but finally it did. I was even able to claim one place just before the line, passing a guy who had seemingly been stricken by cramp.

I forgot to look at the clock as I crossed the line! My watch said 2.29:52 which would have been a one second pb! However I was confident I'd run a bit quicker as I thought I started my watch before crossing the start line. This proved to be correct as I later found my official time was 2.29:47, a whopping 6 second pb.

As I walked into the post-race area, I saw Sean and Pete getting their photo taken and I quickly jumped in. Both had run brilliantly, Sean with a 5 minute pb of 2.28:43 with Pete just two seconds ahead of him. JT finished not far behind me in 2.31:22, meaning we had accomplished our goal of our cumulative finishing time for the 4 of us being less than 10 hours! Our positions were 42nd, 43rd, 52nd (me) and 62nd. Not a bad day out for Kent AC.



The Sub 10 boys!

The marathon also happened to be on my birthday, although I had pretty much forgotten that until I finished. Still it gave me another excuse to celebrate as we headed out to explore the bars and restaurants of New York! A pretty great way to celebrate on a beautiful day in a fantastic city. Thank you to everyone who supported me on the day- Anna, Steve, Clare, Mary Ann, Christopher, Jon, Leah, Victoria, Gareth and Emily (sorry if I've forgotten anyone!).

Overall I'm happy with my performance. This was my first PB of the year, and even though it was a small one and conditions

were good, New York is still a very difficult, undulating course. At the start of my training I was hoping for quicker, but a month out from the race I would have been ecstatic with a sub 230. There wasn't much in my training to suggest I was capable of running that quickly – no long MP sessions, no good races (my only race was a 77 minute half marathon) – but I think I managed to peak at the right time. The main positive I've taken from this race is that I now know I can go quicker at the marathon. I was a bit worried that I had hit a plateau, but having run a PB here on a difficult course and following a period of low fitness, I'm confident I can kick on next year in my next 2 planned marathons, Boston and Berlin.

In the end I don't think my hamstring injury cost me much. I definitely wasn't in as good a shape as Sean and Pete and given I was only a minute behind them, it suggests that I probably got the best out of myself on the day. If anything the injury might have helped me by preventing me from pushing too hard during the third quarter of the race. Having two good friends and teammates just ahead of me and one close behind is definitely motivating and I think being part of such a good group (even if remotely in my case) should hopefully help us all kick on next year. Roll on 2019!.

10 questions with Amy Clements

Lawrence Avery spoke to Amy Clements earlier this year about her running career so far, her killer training sessions, and her expectations ahead of the Frankfurt Marathon. Amy has won far too many races to mention but her career highlights include a 2.39 clocking at the 2017 London Marathon, and, even more impressively, a bronze medal at the 2016 World 50k championship.



You've shown pretty much continuous improvement in your marathon times. What would you put that down to?

"I think the accumulation of running miles and general fitness / endurance improvement over the years has built a good base for marathon training. My recent improvements have been pretty slim though and I expect it's going to get even more tough as I get older."

What is your build up like for a target marathon? What are the key sessions you rely on to get you fit?

"I try to get a lot of easy miles in during the week, combined with at least one speed session plus some sort of session on a Saturday (Parkrun plus some extra miles or a tempo run) and a long run on a Sunday. A killer session (which I learnt from Kent AC legend Stuart Beaney) is a tempo run alternating between miles at marathon pace and half marathon pace up to a maximum of 10 miles. If I can do that (and I can't always, it's really tough!), it gives me confidence going into the marathon."

How do you manage to fit your training in with a busy job?

"I can't really get out at lunchtime, so I fit my training in first thing in the morning or after work and often run-commute (about 5 miles each way) when I'm trying to build up the easy miles."

What common mistakes do you see people making in training?

"Everyone is different so different things work for different people. A mistake I think I've made is trying to do things my own way when actually tagging along with a group run or working your sessions around what other people are doing really helps in terms of motivation, hitting the pace, and it's just generally more fun running with others."

Do you do much additional stuff like strength and conditioning?

“Not as much as I should. I’m quite disciplined about doing physio exercises when I’ve been injured but core strength etc tends to go out of the window when I’m in a training block. Having said that, I am currently trying to build a core strength session into my week (inspired by the ladies I run with at Kent AC) so I’ll see how that goes.”

And how about nutrition – is this an area you focus on? What are your staple foods to fuel marathon training?

“Breakfast has to be porridge, on race day and just in general. In the evenings I eat a lot of brown rice with veg and various veggie protein like Quorn chilli, tofu, chickpea curry, dhal etc. I’m also slightly obsessed with peanut butter and beetroot (though not at the same time!).”

What is the proudest moment in your running career so far?

“Listening to the national anthem on the podium with my team mates (Sam Amend, Rebecca Hilland and Hannah Oldroyd) after the 50k in Doha was very surreal but I think running 2.39.11 at London 2017 has to be it. It was such a relief.”

Frankfurt Marathon is on the horizon. How has the training gone? What are your hopes and expectations?

“It’s been far from ideal to be honest due to various niggles which have stopped me from getting my mileage up until quite recently. I entered with the hope of a PB but I’ll have to wait and see. I’ve managed to get a couple of PB’s over shorter distances this summer so fingers crossed.”

You represented GB at the World 50k championships and came 3rd! Do you think you’ll do more ultra-marathons in the future?

“Never say never! At the moment, I think I’ll stick with the shorter distances (including the marathon) while I’ve still got a bit of speed but maybe when I get older the longer distances or trail runs will seem more appealing.”

What one piece of advice would you give someone who is just getting into running?

“Do it! You’ll never know what you’re capable of until you get out and give it a try. You might surprise yourself!”

Vets Corner

Men's Kent Vets champs Dartford

4th December 2018

Men's Kent County Vets Championships, Central Park Dartford, Dec 1-2018 Terrific silver medal for Rob Laing and Medals for all our teams at Kent County Vets Championships

Although Kent AC men might not have been able to quite match the women who came away with both an individual winner and team medals, the men still had plenty to celebrate. And whilst the men may not have had a winner, they came very close in the shape of Rob Laing in the V40 race. His second place and the manner in which it was achieved, had to be the stand out run of the day.

The fixture was held for the third year running on fields adjoining Central Park Dartford. Not the most scenic of courses, but it has certain advantages – not least the fact that for many of us it's a good venue to get to. Also, you have to say the officials do a fine job on the organizing front and the results are produced with commendable efficiency.

First up were the V50's, who unfortunately, as a result of an accident whilst warming up, were without Jules Geevers. Due to the amount of rain we've had in recent weeks, the steep banks that are part of the course were a lot muddier than in previous years. Warming up poor Jules slipped and did what we now know to be serious damage to his knee. I'd just like to echo the sentiments expressed in the emails – supporting Jules and wishing him all the best in the rehab that will follow. Minus Jules, those running in a high standard race did well to come away with third place medals. There were the usual suspects, Len Reilly and Luke Armitage, but they were split by Roger

Beardsworth. He seemed to like the long flat stretches where you could get a rhythm going. Len was 18th, while Roger was 27th and followed in by Luke, 28th. Also, in the race were Paul McCrone who came 40th – a very decent run in what was a big field, while Mick Barlow was another victim of the course and sustained an injury.

Next there was the race that sees a combined range of women and men running in the same race, but in their separate categories. In the V60 men's race, solid packing saw them come away with silver medals. John Barron, who was a little disappointed with his run in the previous week's South of the Thames, had a very positive run. Although the winner from both 2016 and 17, Alan Camp, was missing, the depth of the race was still strong and John's top ten finish (9th) was a quality run. Earning the second place team medals were Bernie Hutchinson 14th and Julian Spencer Wood, 17th.

As is usually the case, the V40 men were the last to race. Whilst we have tremendous strength in depth in this category there was slight apprehension going into the race. Two of last year's team were missing along with man on the move Stuart. A lot of people will be aware there was an extra incentive for our athletes to win the team event – so I probably only need to mention the word trophy! It was likely a motivating factor in getting Chris Greenwood on the start line.

He pulled a hamstring only a couple of weeks back, but decided to give it a go. It proved a risk too far as Chris didn't make it beyond the first lap with the hamstring proving too troublesome. However, just as required, the other guys stepped up and successfully retained the elusive trophy. They all put in a shift, but Rob Laing really excelled and came away with a tremendously well-earned silver medal. After Chris had dropped out, a group of three broke away and enjoyed a terrific tussle for most of the race. The three in question were race winner, Blackheath's, Alex Gibbins, third placer, Tonbridge's, Julian Rendall and Rob. The three stayed together for much of the race before Rob and Alex Gibbins put daylight between them and Julian Rendall. There was a fierce scrap to decide the winner in which Rob lost out over the final mile. However, he can't be faulted for the effort he put in. It was to prove a bit nerve shredding for supporters as the effort Rob had put in trying to stay with the Blackheath man was taking its toll and Julian Rendall started to close on Rob. Fortunately, he was able to summon just enough energy to hold him off and take a very fine second place. Providing the necessary support to ensure we came away winners again were, Phil Sanders, 11th, Will Pitt 13th and Tom Webb 20th. Phil and Will

(sounds like a double act) had provided great mutual support as they ran together for most of the race. And it can't have been easy for Tom who ran ever so well to come in 20th and ensure the win. Although he was receiving a lot of encouragement during the race, the shouts about how vital he maintained his position or overtook someone must have provided added pressure. But Tom hung in well and was rewarded with a trip to help Stewart with his move!

So, another highly successful day for the club. It was appropriate then that Ron Hale was on hand to see the club come away with so much silverware. I hesitate to use the word legend, as it is so over used. However, Ron probably justifies the epithet. He's been a Kent AC member longer than many of Saturdays veteran runners have been alive. Now a sprightly 90+ Ron seemed fit and in good spirits. A great advert for life long running. Something many of us might aspire to. However, unlike Ron, some of us probably spend too much time in the pub to make it to such a venerable age.

There were a number of other good performances that didn't get a name check: they can be seen in the full results on the Kent County site.

Results:

V40 1.**Kent AC** 46; 2 Medway & M 57; 3Dulwich Runners 71

V50: 1.Medway & M 17; 2 Tonbridge AC 32; 3 **Kent AC** 73

V60: 1.Cambridge Harriers 22; 2 **Kent AC** 40; 3 Blackheath & B 48

Women's Kent Vets Champs – Dartford

2nd December 2018 |

On a cold, wet and windy Saturday the Kent AC women kicked off December with an impressive performance at the Kent County Vets Champs in Dartford. Over 3 miles of muddy and slippery terrain (I'm told there were some regrets over not using 15-inch spikes, especially as the ground was quite churned up already after the previous race!) the women dominated across all age categories with Amy Clements coming first overall (and in the V35) and recent Dublin Marathon runner Nicky Hayes coming 2nd in the V55 category.

The V35 team saw Clements (in her first race back after Frankfurt Marathon, where she finished 25th overall and 2nd in her age category) crossed the line in 18.35. She was followed by the in-form Laura McCrave (who ran 19.39 at Victoria Docks parkrun last weekend) finishing in 9th and Zuzana Nemeckova in 15th (just off two back-to-back international major marathons this autumn!). Heather Castle competing in her first XC race came home strongly to round out the team.

In the V45 category the always consistent Ali Farrell was first Kent AC runner home in 5th place. She was followed by Sarah Dowling, who has had an eye-catching XC

season so far competing in all the fixtures to date. Third scorer was Andrea Barber, who has been putting in some quality training sessions and great parkrun times over the last few months. Rounding out the V45 team is the always consistent (and great photo taker!) Sarah Young. The team came 3rd overall in a quality field.

A second place in the V55 for Nicky Hayes (who would have felt these were easy conditions after her experience at Boston marathon earlier in the year!) put the team in good position to take out the age category with XC regulars Carol Grady and Zoe Grattan second and third scorer for the team.



Kate Williams unfortunately had to pull out of the race to take on medic duties taking one of the men to hospital to be treated for what sounds like a nasty injury.

Results: V35 1: Kent AC 1,9,15, 2 Tunbridge Wells Harriers 8,11,12, 3 Dulwich Runners AC 2,13,25

V45, 1 Tonbridge AC 3,4,6, 2 Dulwich Runners AC 1,8,13, 3 Kent AC 5,11,20

V55, 1 Kent AC 2,5,8

Remember Summer?

Every 'Best Known Performance' on your PO10 page is a reflection on your hard work, dedication and sacrifices for running. But sometimes, on rare, magical summer nights a personal best transcends an individual's performance to one which we all feel part of. A result year's in the making, one that combined a perfect cocktail of talent, dedication, world class coaching, a long-term vision, training partners and a willingness to risk, which elevates the club into the national running conscience. I'm talking of course, about Alex Yee's 10,000m pb, British Championship victory and qualification for his first international track championships Highgate Night of 10,000pbs in May.

Club stalwarts Ben Harding and Dave Morgan tell us how that international debut night in night unfolded:

An anomaly happened on 7th August this year as Kent AC members and other regulars rushed out of work early to start Tuesday night training promptly at 6:30pm. Why? Because those who had not made the trip to Berlin had come together to do as the Kenyans do and watch their local athlete, in our case Alex Yee, compete at the European Athletic Championship 10,000m on the TV.

The Catford Constitutional Club kindly hosted the event on their brand-new TV purchased

for the World Cup. The manager was quite surprised to see over 50 runners turn up, buy a drink, and glue themselves to the screen and cheer each and every time Alex Yee appeared. Alex ran a fantastic race, doing everyone proud with his bold running giving it his all.

The bar manager – quite bemused at what had just happened in his pub on a normal quiet Tuesday night – assured us he'd put the event back on for us next year – no pressure Alex!



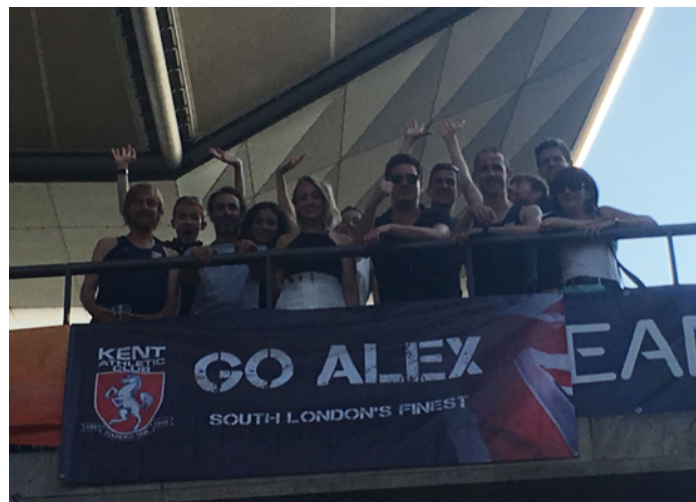
Having trained with Alex since his early days at the club in 2013, there was no way I was missing seeing him on the big stage. Ken obviously felt the same, and after 15 others jumped at the opportunity of an away day, I found myself tour leader for the International Alex Yee Fan Club.

7th August was game day for as much for us as it was for him, and excitement of the build-up was tempered by temperature predictions being in the low 30s at 8pm gun time. On my morning training run around the Tiergarten (Berlin's Hyde Park) with the guys, you can guess who we bumped into; Alex. He was in great spirits coupled with a tinge of slight apprehension for what was to come.

Just walking into the stadium was an amazing experience; you can feel the history, you can feel the footprints of Jesse Owen's four gold medal performances and Zatopek's first international victory. However, the sweltering evening, swiftly filled seats and the packed schedule soon focused our minds on the present. We put up our banner and prepared ourselves for Alex's first steps on the

track. Bang! He appears looking supreme in his GB kit. We all stand up in excitement and begin cheering on Alex lap upon lap. Yee, Yee, Yee! Simple, effective and our favourite of the night. I doubt the French TV presenters below us enjoyed it quite as much, but who cares about them. Alex goes off strong, stretching out with that floating style, keeping pace with local favourite Richard Ringer (who also won the NOTTMPB).

The heat eventually overbears even Ringer and he drops out with an apologetic wave to his supporters. Yet Alex remains locked in. Sod the heat. Our cheering continues, getting louder as the leading group gets thinner with Alex unfazed. We sense blood, we sense a shock. But being there at the very death is beyond him and the final 800m is tough as his pace drops to marathon speed. Finishing in 28:58 in Alex really did himself proud on his international debut. I know he wanted more, even though I know he wanted more. It shows he is like any athlete, always wanting more. I am sure 2019 will be an amazing year, (as long as he can avoid all concrete bollards).



Southern League Tooting 18/8/2018

Kent AC won their final SAL fixture to secure promotion to division 2 of the Southern Athletics League.

Kent were convincing winners in Tooting. Promotion was confirmed after a tense period of worry after our match win before it was finally confirmed that Bexley had beaten our rivals Cambridge Harriers by only 4 points meaning we go up on points difference.

Thank you and well done to all the athletes who competed this season.

Thank you also to all volunteers who have helped out this year: Rob Moye, Norman Fairbrass, Ken Pike, Len Reilly, Adrian Lowther, Annabelle Hadlow, Ed Hadlow, Roger Beardsworth, Bernie Hutchinson, Pete Boxshall, Anne Boxshall and probably some others that I've forgotten.

There were some excellent individual performances during the match with many athletes covering several events:

- Shaun Mulligan, who was ill and has recently been in hospital, defied his girlfriend's advice not to compete and heroically scored 22 points across 8 events.
- Alexa Parker did five events scoring 13 points for the team, including a win in the 800m A race (2:23.5).
- Courtney Green won the A string javelin and shot and scored 13 points.
- Isabel Bradley, who is now an experienced multi-eventer, did 5 events scoring 11 points including impressive performances in the 100m and 100m hurdles.
- Kehinde Dauda, who also prepares the club accounts, won the 110m and 400m hurdle A races and came second in the A triple jump scoring 11 points.
- Women's captain Victoria Buck led from the front contributing 10 points from the javelin, long jump, discus and 800m.
- Tracey Griffiths has been hugely valuable to the team all season, she did all the throws and scored 9 points.
- Max Harbord did the pole vault, triple jump, long jump and ran a relay leg.
- It was good to see some new faces competing for the men. Max Evans won the 400m B race in 54.2. Harry Browning won the 400m A race in 52.8 and won the 200m B race in 23.2 Both contributed brilliantly to the relay teams.
- Nathan Brown ran 11.4 and 22.8 to win the 100m and 200m A races.
- Dan Pettitt and Calum Fraser secured second places in the 800m and 1500m races. Tim Alexander won the 800m B race and also fancied doing the long jump (4.34) which got him second in the B string.
- Anthony Johnson (15.45) and Phil Sanders (16.56) won the 5000m races.
- Amy Clements won the 3000m A race in a PB of 9:46.5 and also won the 1500m (4:54.4).
- Georgina Wiley won the 3000m B race and ran her first 400m race for some time.

British League, Division 2 Match 4: Bournemouth

6th August 2018

This is a bittersweet race report to include because at December's committee meeting, members unanimously voted to withdraw the club from the British League. The decision was not taken lightly, but it was taken in the best interests of the club. It was no-longer considered tenable to maintain our presence in a league that was proposing three Sunday matches to far flung destinations including Wigan and Swansea, and which had ambitions to become a mixed league by 2020. These two changes combined made competing against a diminishing number of top national clubs increasingly difficult. This however doesn't take away from the phenomenal achievement of the Summer's promotion.



The winning feeling

‘What a great day and a fabulous result as our A team really produced the goods on the day and WON the last British League of the season to secure promotion to Div 1.

We had our largest team of the year – something to do with the fact that Joe Appiah had organised a stopover no doubt ! We had a solid start to the proceedings with Joe Appiah and a welcome returnee, Antoni Davis Philip, securing 8 points in the Long Jump and then Callum Robertson, on a trip down from Aberdeen, and Ethelbert Metzger secured 9 points in the Pole Vault. More solid points followed as Sean Breathnach, over from Ireland as usual, and Courtney Green secured a solid

14 points in the Hammer. We were securing points steadily, if not spectacularly, which was the same in the High Jump as Joe and our other guy down from Aberdeen, Ryan Hewitson, jumped well with best jumps of 1.68 m and 1.88 m respectively in a high standard competition to secure 4th in the B and 5th in the A competitions. The first event of the day on the track, the 400m hurdles, earned us another 8 points as Kehinde Dauda had responded well to a late call up as he came come in 7th place and Ethelbert also responded well to run in his first ever 400 Hurdles – showing promise int his new event for him. So our usual slow start was well under way as 5 of our 6 weaker events had been

completed and we were in 5th place yet only 20 points off the lead – such was these guys welcome contribution.

The 800 m was next up for us as Ben Harding ran well to secure a good 3rd place in the A string, coming agonisingly close to winning it, and Dan Pettit ran a good race to earn 5th place in the B string with a well judged run – he is one of the most improved athletes of the year. Next up was the 100 m where Nathan Brown stepped up to the A string due to an unlucky injury to usual 100 m runner Jon Browne and he performed well with a great 3rd place in the A string and new recruit George Huxley did well to run into a strong headwind and record a time of 11.5 secs. Then one of our stronger events where the 3000 m Steeplechase where Chris Greenwood performed with credit especially as he is currently in heavy training for the Berlin Marathon as he came home in 4th place in the A string and he was backed up by Neil Phillips who secured 3rd place in the B string.

By now we had clawed our way up to 4th place in the team competition and we were greatly helped in our quest to move higher in a good standard 110 m Hurdles as Ryan Hewitson, also down from Aberdeen, performed with credit as he came home in a time of 15.77 secs to secure 5th place. Then our charge started with Team Captain Joe Appiah leading the way in the B string to gain a great win in a time of 15.70 secs to win decisively and they gained our first of our 20 point hauls or better on the day. Then we had a great result – a double win in the Discus as first Sean Breathnach threw 45'41 m to secure the A string win and then Courtney Green secured the B string win as he threw almost 40 m – due reward for the extra training he had recently put in. Next up were two of our stars Shawn Wright and Conrad Williams who really delivered as first Shawn secured the A string win with a superbly judged run and a star run from

Conrad who secured the B string win comfortably to end a 17 year period in which he has achieved so much including many major games for GB and had the distinction of Captaining GB as well.

Next up was the 1500 m where Owen Hind and Ben Harding performed creditably as they secured 4th place in the A string and 5th place in the B string with Ben digging hard after getting some stick from the guy who was temporarily in front of him. Next up was the 200 m where first Nathan Brown and then Reece Dimesh performed solidly to both claim solid 4th places in the A and B strings respectively. We were in 3rd place by now and only 12m points off the lead so it was all to play for!

The later events in the field were now coming in and a great Triple Jump result where Chuxx Onyia demonstrated his Scottish International pedigree as he won the A string Triple jump despite his restricting injury which had put him out all year – it was worth the trip down from Scotland to see the smile on his face. Not to be outdone our venerable Joe Appiah performed well to secure 2nd place in the B string and secure 2nd place and gain us 26 points. Then the Shot Put as first one of our star performers of the season, Sean Breathnach, then threw almost 17 m to win comfortably and he was backed up well by Courtney Green who threw almost 13 metres to secure a fine 2nd place in the B string and add another 26 points to our total. We had clawed our way up to second place – one of the promotion slots but there were 3 events left !

The 5000 m was extremely tough with the temperature still 31* C as last individual track event went off and straight away our two runners John Gilbert and late replacement Tom Mower went to the front and pushed the pace on relentlessly. Slowly other runners dropped off until there were only 3 left with 4 laps to our

guys just losing out in the final sprint to a top competitor from Crawley. They had given everything and secured us another 26 points into the bargain.

We dominated the 4 x 100 relay as our team of Darren Green, Conrad, George and Nathan Brown ran well and changes brilliantly and secured a fine win in an excellent time of 42.14 secs in windy conditions. We were in the joint lead with it all to play for in the 4 x 400 m relay so first Shawn Wright lead off the team to secure a lead as he handed over to new guy Harry Browning, who must wonder what he was letting himself into, yet he rallied well looking to lose a place but he dug deep to had over to Reece Dimesh still in 1st place. He then ran well and handed over in 2nd place but only a few metres down to none other than our own Conrad Williams. He took the lead and held the inside lane well as he went into 2nd gear before unleashing a trademark kick to secure an excellent win for the team and bring down a glittering career in fine style

– he will be really missed in athletics inn general and will go down as our finest athlete in our 133 year history.

All that remained was for his statutory dunking in the water jump as a delighted team had secured promotion with an excellent win with everyone playing their part in true Kent AC style.

We performed brilliantly as a team by having our biggest team for the season of 23 athletes. We picked up points from every event and every team member place an excellent role to help up win the match by only 4 points. That meant the mastersplan has worked and we are promoted to British League Division 1 for next season. Overall league position being 2nd. We capped off a great day by winning both relays at the end. A lovely send off for Conrad Williams last race before his retirement.

Brilliant day for all involved. Very proud of the team today and thanks to all who took part and contributed this season.

