On 3 August, Windmilers gathered at Belgrave Hall for the midweek training session. From now on, Tuesday and Thursday night runs will set out from this venue on Denmark Road. For details, visit www.windmilers.org.uk
One of the great things about being a Windmiler is being able to get a group of people to run a race with you, whether it’s here in the UK or abroad. In May, I ran the Riddlesdown parkrun and the London Vitality 10k with Windmilers (right), and then in June, headed out to France, to participate in Les Courants de la Liberte in Caen, again, with another fun bunch of club members (below) – and what memorable experiences all the races were! Other Windmilers have also been running 10k’s and half marathons in New Zealand, Australia and Spain. Perhaps you, too, have been running in more exotic locations than Wimbledon Common – or are planning to now that summer’s well and truly here? If you didn’t know it already, parkrun can be found all over the world, so you might just find your holiday destination has a 5k organised for Saturday morning at 9am. Wherever you decide to run away, don’t forget to send in your running reports and photographs to waffle@windmilers.org.uk so club members can share in the experience – and maybe try it out, too.

In the meantime, Happy Holidays
Sally Jones, Waffle editor
Let’s hear it for our volunteers!

It has to be said, Windmilers are great at volunteering! Just take a look at the number of club members who helped out at the recent evening MABAC at the Rugby Club (over 40 in total). It was the same on the 17 June when a large group of you gave up some of your time on that Saturday (after running parkrun!) to help out at the stall we had at the Wimbledon Guild Village Fair. Unlike last year, when the weather was wet, cold and muddy, this year’s event was blessed with glorious sunshine, which made being outside talking to locals about the Windmilers and what we get up to all the more enjoyable.

One of those volunteers was new member Gemma Hardy, who says: ‘I had a fantastic time helping out on the Windmiler stand, trying to encourage new recruits! It was impressive how much of a presence the Windmilers obviously has around Wimbledon, as most of the people I chatted to said they recognised the vests and had seen runners out and about on various sessions. The tri and social aspects of the club also seemed to interest most people I spoke to – I used the coffee/cafe stops as an important selling point! All in all, an enjoyable afternoon spent chatting to current and future Windmilers alike.’

Long-time member Mike Forder said of the day: ‘For me, it was a pleasure to just be able to turn up and chat to people about the club that I’ve loved and got so much out of for so many years.’

Everyone did a sterling job throughout the day, but top spot (and photo op!) has to go to Robert Beeby, who was seen talking to Merton Mayor, Marsie Skeete. And let’s not forget all those other Windmilers who helped David Turner and Jeff Hoadley manage the car parking.

A huge thank you goes out to you all.

Village Fair volunteers (clockwise, from top left) Jo Burge, Anna Desogus, Bernie Maher Allan, John Sabourin, Neil Guthrie and Simon Adams; Robert Beeby with Lady Mayor Marsie Skeete; MABAC helpers marshals Anneli Collins and Paul Whiteley; timekeepers Lorna Young and Patricia Turner; briefing before the race; Simon, Ben and David Turner; Annie and Phil Tosh on registration
Farnham Castle, 21 May A beautiful day for a run in the lovely grounds of Farnham Castle park. A MABAC venue in only its second year but already a favourite. Many Windmilers came by train direct to Farnham and walked up the hill, great for a warm-up. Eighteen Windmilers took on the long course out of 122 runners, with Gordon Berry being first Windmiler over the line in 38:57. In the men’s points race, he was followed by Simon Adams in 35:20, Samuel Pickford in 36:27, Simon Podd in 37:37, Clive Scammell in 40:01 and John Carter in 44:27. In the ladies’ points race, first Windmiler was Gabrielle Kurdyla in 38:57 in her first MABAC, followed home by Chiara Samele in 41:01 and Lisa Wood in 42:45. Nine Windmilers tackled the short course out of a total of 28 runners. Windmilers stay in second place in the league on 1,505 points behind Epsom Oddballs on 1,752 with Dorking & Mole Valley third on 1,431.

MABAC DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER Lightwater Country Park
SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER Nonsuch Park
SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER Farley Heath

Contact MABAC rep Colin Harris at mabac@windmilers.org.uk

Luca Pickford ran the short course in a time of 28:24
Holmwood, 11 June A smaller than usual turnout for this race on National Trust land just south of Dorking. Many Windmilers away in France meant a field of just 17 club members started in a field of only 94. Simon Adams was first male Windmiler over the line in a PB of 33:45 and Chiara Samele was first for the ladies in a PB of 38:21. On the short course, out of a field of 15, four Windmilers took part, with Sam Pickford pacing Luca and Zoe to very good times. Results on the day mean that Windmilers are now in third place in the league. Positions at the end of this event: Epsom Oddballs 2,117, Dorking & Mole Valley 1,909 and Wimbledon Windmilers 1,718.

Wimbledon Common, 1 August A very good turnout of Windmilers at this evening event, with 63 doing the long course and 13 completing the short course. Keith MacIntosh was first Windmiler over the line in 28:42. Other main point-scorers for Windmilers were David Sharman in 28:52, Mark Rabbetts in 29:03, James Parker in 29:35, Fraser Willcox in 30:06 and Gavin Mclaughlan in 30:15. For the ladies, first Windmiler was Bronwyn Mayo in 34:19, followed by Julia Donovan in 35:29 and Julie Burgess in 36:00. In the short course, first Windmiler over the line was Lulu Weisz in 20:17 followed by Matt Weisz in 22:00. A huge thank you goes out to all the club members who helped out on the night, especially Wally and Carol Winter and Pauline Hawkes for once again serving up a wonderful spread of food afterwards. Windmilers scored an impressive 835 points to put us in second place in the league. Positions at the end of this event: Epsom Oddballs 2,740, Windmilers 2,553 and Dorking & Mole Valley 2,551.
As the seasons change, we’ll soon be saying goodbye to light evenings, mild temperatures and tarmac and start getting stuck into bracing conditions, eye-watering hills and wet feet.

Yes, cross country season is just round the corner.

Some runners grumble about cross country, but a determined group of Windmilers just love running up and down muddy hills wearing next to nothing in the cold. Here are a few reasons they give for coming back every year.

- Cross-country races are more about the experience than course accuracy. Although they are usually roughly 5 miles, you’ll struggle to find runners whinging that a course came up short on their GPS watch. Each course is appreciated on its own merits, the combination of terrain, hills, sand, gravel, mud, slurry, tree roots and fallen logs all make each course unique and interesting.
- Cross-country runs are almost a meditation, they encourage you to focus on the moment, nothing else matters on the course. The trail requires all your concentration and energy with the result that deadlines, to-do lists, and other worries fade away in that moment.
- The races are over relatively quickly, about half the time it takes to do a half marathon, and after all the effort, you can go about your weekend, which will often involve a club get-together.
- There are few events where we get to run for our club as a team and this year the Surrey League have been talking about including scores for the B team, so twice as many can score points if that’s your thing. But there is room for everyone on our team, you can zoom around the front and score points or just squelch about at the back for the sheer love of the grit and grime. If you don’t fancy running, then you can still plop some wellies on and dole out cheers and cake, you’d be very popular. For those interested in speed, a season of cross country will bring benefits the following summer and will probably find your times are a bit faster on a certain four-laps on tarmac race.
- There will be plenty of opportunities to get stuck into cross country this season. We usually do the Surrey League and South of the Thames, but we’ll be keeping an eye out for other events, too. This year we will be co-hosting the first Surrey League men’s race on the 14 October (Wimbledon Common), so if you are not running please do volunteer (we’ll need lots of marshals).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

START FITNESS SURREY LEAGUE
14 OCTOBER Wimbledon Common
11 NOVEMBER
13 JANUARY 2018
10 FEBRUARY 2018

SURREY MASTERS CROSS COUNTRY
21 OCTOBER Richmond Park

NATIONAL CROSS COUNTRY RELAYS
4 NOVEMBER Berry Hill Park Mansfield

SOUTH OF THE THAMES
25/26 NOVEMBER 5-mile team race, Beckenham
16 DECEMBER Championships, Wellington Memorial Aldershot

SOUTH OF ENGLAND
21 OCTOBER Relays
18 NOVEMBER London Cross Country Championships
9 DECEMBER Cross Country Masters & Inter Counties Championships
27 JANUARY 2018 Cross Country Main Championships

Other dates will be confirmed on the website
Even if you’re ultimately preparing for a race on the roads, there’s a huge amount to be said for including a significant chunk of trail running within your training mix. It can bring variety, form improvement, pleasure, and a better understanding of how your body works. Your balance, agility, core stability and power can all be developed as you move over mixed terrain and a range of surfaces.

The vast majority of training for elite Kenyan distance runners takes place on red dirt trails above the Rift Valley, and it seems to work fairly well for them. They can get through a massive training volume with relatively few injuries, because they’re working (at altitude) on rolling ground with a little bit of give underfoot. And that means their cardio fitness can be developed without the corresponding impact that would come from doing the same on tarmac.

And for most of us, too, trail running probably already makes up a significant proportion of what we do – 3-mile Handicap, Sunday Social, Wimbledon parkrun, the towpath, Richmond Park. All of those are definitely included. We’re very lucky to have some wonderful running country right on our doorstep – and that’s without thinking about MABACs and other options in deepest, darkest Surrey.

So, hopefully, none of this is new news, and trail running may already be a big reason for you being a Windmiler.

If you’re slightly uncomfortable on rough ground, then pay attention and slow it down. That’s one of the differences and challenges, and reasons why it’s satisfying – you need to think your way around, and be mindful of what you’re running over. If it’s muddy, or hilly, or you’ve got to climb over a stile or check your directions, then you’ll naturally be slower – and that’s a more intelligent way to do it than letting your splits dictate something stupid.

If it’s more efficient to walk up a hill then walk – there’s no extra cake for running every step. Like everything else, if you don’t practise it, then you’ll never become more comfortable with it. So, occasionally, it’s worth actively seeking out the narrower trails with the tree roots, or the loose gravel hill, and treating that as a technical drill. You’ll build your fitness at the same time, and it’ll still give you a solid cardio workout. But you’ll be working on other things, too.

Trail running doesn’t have to be super-long or hilly – although it can be both of those things. It spans everything from a race I did in the Alps in June (La Verticale du Criou – a mere 2.8k long, but with 1,450m of ascent) all the way through to 150 mile virtually-flat canal races (© P Chandler). The point is, it’s off tarmac.

I did a very quick and unscientific survey of a few people within the club who regularly hit the trails. Some themes:

- Enjoying getting lost, finding new corners, a sense of discovery.
- Child-like pleasure in getting muddy and dirty, and occasionally falling over when mucking about in the woods.
- Getting a real connection to the place where you are running – nature, landscape, geology – through sound and smell as well as sight.
- Escaping the daily grind of traffic, noise, technology.
- Working hard – or not – based on perceived effort and your own preference, rather than agonising over your splits or distance.
- Unlocking big training benefits in a more enjoyable way than just ticking off numbers on the roads.

So, if any of that appeals more than (or alongside) mindless tarmac-bashing, then there are some fantastic trail options right here on our doorstep. If you want suggestions (or ideas on trail training, kit, or technique), then please just ask.

**HOW TO DO IT**

- Land on your forefoot to enable the ankle to absorb unevenness
- Quick, precise ground contact, and a faster cadence than on the road
- Don’t be a slave to your watch – be smart and allow the terrain to set the pace
- Use your arms for balance, and for power on the hills
- Look ahead, anticipate what’s coming and adjust your stride and angle of approach

**TRAINING BENEFITS**

- Develop cardio fitness while avoiding impact injuries
- Transition towards mid- or forefoot landing
- Increased balance, agility, and proprioception
- Improved running form – running tall, with strong arm drive
- Better understanding of effort levels
- And, if it’s more enjoyable, then you’ll be motivated to do more of it. So it’s possible you’ll end up doing more overall volume, too

**Looking up** Still a long way to go at La Verticale du Criou

**Elite runners on the Kenyan trails**
Wimbledon Common, 27 June Wet, wet, wet. What an evening of sudden rain creating puddles and mud – and a long wait for the faster runners before the start. Marshals were huddled under umbrellas and trees. Numbers were down, but still 44 turned out to run. Conditions were such that only seven PBs were recorded on the night. Winners on the night were Jo Burge and David Stanley.

Wimbledon Common, 30 May Eighty-four runners turned up on a lovely evening at the Windmill for the second race in the handicap series. It was a fast race with Keith MacIntosh over the line in 16:46. With 27 PBs recorded on the night, Windmilers were off for a well-earned beer at the Crooked Billet to await the results.

Wimbledon Common, 27 July A lovely night for the fourth race in this year’s 3-mile handicap series. Good running conditions with a few puddles on the course, but otherwise the going was good to soft. Fifty-nine runners turned out for the race with 54 finishers, as a number of runners stayed to assist an injured runner who had fallen just on the track after Parkside and had to wait for an ambulance to turn up. Well done to all those who helped out and gave up their race to help our injured colleague. (Note: The injured runner is OK.)

On the night, 13 PBs were recorded, with some very high age-gradings. Winners on the night were Julia Donovan and Bruce Chessell. The last race in this year’s series is Tuesday, 29 August, with a prompt start at 7.15pm as the nights will be drawing in and the car park will be closing earlier. Not running? Then marshals will be needed to help out on the course, so do sign up.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
- 29 AUGUST Final 3-mile Handicap of the 2017 series
  Wimbledon Common, 7.15pm
  (sign up at the Windmill cafe, from 6.30-7pm)
Wimbledon Common, 22 June A calm, barmy and hot evening saw Windmilers gathering at the Rugby Club to register for our annual Windmile On The Common. Forty-four runners turned up for the race, although some had gone up to the start just beyond the Windmill to join up with those running up from the clubhouse. Watches were synchronised at the finish line and then the runners headed up to start the race. First over the line was Matt Gallagher in 5:12 followed closely by Mark Rabbetts in 5:15 and Gavin McLaughlan in 5:16. First lady was Diya Dahiya in 6:27 with Julie Burgess home in 6:30 and Bernadette Maher Allan in 6:38. Back to the rugby club for prize-giving. Winners were Matt Gallagher, Mark Rabbetts, Paul O’Connor, Diya Dahiya, Julie Burgess and Jean Taylor.
London Vitality 10k

There were 34 Windmilers at this year’s Vitality 10k on 29 May, including Francesca Carter, who writes: ‘A perennial favourite – from BUPA to Vitality – and organised by London Marathon ensuring a slick operation, rather more relaxed than the marathon and including the best bits of the course without the extra 20 miles – certainly one of my favourite races! WW usually have a good turnout and today was no exception. Perfect weather with overnight rain dampening down the pollen from the plane trees, cloud with a bit of sun and a bit of rain, though humidity levels high. An array of bands and choirs along the route were appreciated by all the runners.’

A family affair Carl Warren-Dudley ran/walked the 10k with his father

Finishers (l-r) Clive Scammell, Sally Jones, Caroline Higget, Stephanie Bull, John Sabourin

IN THE PAPERS
Marathons can be bad for you in the long run, scientists have warned, after a study found 80 per cent of competitors suffer kidney injury because of dehydration. Researchers at Yale University said that although the kidneys of participants recovered within two days, their findings raised questions concerning the potential long term impact.

The findings were published in the American Journal of Kidney Diseases, as thousands prepared for the recent London Marathon. Previous research has shown that engaging in vigorous activities, such as military training in warm climates can damage the kidneys, but little is known about the effects of marathon running.

Researchers led by Prof Chirag Parikh of Yale collected blood and urine samples from runners before and after their race, and analysed a variety of markers of kidney injury, including serum creatinine levels, kidney cells on microscopy and proteins in urine. Soon after a race, 82 per cent of the runners showed stage 1 acute kidney injury, a condition in which the kidneys fail to filter waste. Prof Parikh said: ‘The kidneys respond to the physical stress of marathon running as if it’s injured, in a way that’s similar to hospital patients when the kidney is affected by medical and surgical complications.’
Mark Rabbetts added victory in June in the Surrey 10k Championships, run as part of the Richmond 10k at Ham, to his victory just a few weeks ago in the Surrey 10 miles Championship (both V50s category), run as part of the Dorking 10 in Dorking. It can’t be too often that a Windmiler has had such success. This latest result also leaves him leading the current standings in the Surrey Road League Series for the same category.

‘The race on Sunday must have been just about the hottest race I’ve ever done, it was bonkers, over 30 degrees, maybe second only to the infamous Jim Braben 10k back in 2006!’

The Parkland Relays took place on 14 June – and a lot of Windmilers showed up to run. According to men’s team captain Norman Urquia: ‘This has to be one of the most fun events of the year. A summer evening, Richmond park at its best, 2.97-mile lap, the adrenaline rush of running with teammates and a social afterwards and a flurry of PBs. What more can you ask for? If you didn’t get a PB you can blame the slightly longer course this year. We had 20 teams competing between the ladies and gents.’
When did you start doing parkrun? My first parkrun (or Wimbledon Common Time Trial as it was then called) was at event number 9 on 3 March 2007.

How did you hear about it? I think I heard it mentioned at a midweek training session. I was certainly not the first Windmiler to take part. The first run included Paul Tibbs.

Tell us your memories of the first parkrun at Wimbledon Common... The set-up was very different from today. Wimbledon Common was the second parkrun to be started, after Bushy Park, because they were worried that Bushy was getting too big (fields of over 200 – makes you laugh now). You didn’t have to pre-register and print off your barcode. You just turned up and ran. At the finish, you were given a numbered disc which you took to a volunteer at a laptop who found your name in the list of all runners and noted your position for that week. As the number of different finishers expanded, there could be too many people with the same or similar names, so they had to change the system and introduced barcodes for better individual identification. There were complaints from people who said they were a name, not a number!

Originally, the Wimbledon Common course started just south of the Windmill, heading down Windmill Road towards the Village. Unfortunately, there were some incidents with horses, so we moved to the current course. To begin with, the fields were about 50-70 runners, so I got my best finishing position of 14th with a time of 21:26. Nowadays, that would put me in the top 50 (just!).

Outside of Wimbledon Common, what is your favourite parkrun to do in the UK? I’m not as big a tourist as many others in the club such as Louise Ayling or Mike Forder who have both done more than 100 different parkruns. I will always run at Wimbledon unless I am away (over 92% of my runs have been at Wimbledon), but that is one of the great things about parkrun. You can set your own targets, such as running all those within the M25, known as LON DONE. My brother has run all of the courses in Kent. Of course, as soon you reach your target, they set up a new event.

Apart from Wimbledon, I have run at Bushy Park, Shorne Woods (my brother’s home run), Nonsuch, Richmond Park, Riddlesdown, Fulham Palace, Lloyd Park, Folkstone, Kingston, Hereford plus Kirkcaldy and St Andrews when taking my son to university in Scotland. My favourite in England of these would be Bushy. Although it is massive with fields regularly over 1,000, the wide start allows you to run at your own pace from quite early. It is also dead flat (I’m not good on hills). I prefer Kirkcaldy of the two courses I’ve tried in Scotland, despite it having a sneaky slope tucked away at the back of each lap round the park. When I ran at St Andrews, I bumped into someone from Hercules Wimbledon who also runs regularly at Wimbledon. You can’t get away from us Wombles!

What parkruns have you run abroad? My first overseas parkrun was in Delta Park, Johannesburg, South Africa and my last in Albert Park, Melbourne, Australia. In between I have been on four trips to Poland doing parkruns in Gdynia, Gdansk, Warsaw and Lodz (pronounced Woody). These trips are organised by Peter Fordham, from Ranelagh Harriers, and the group normally consists of about 30 people from 15 different UK parkruns ranging from Cardiff and Devon to the North of England, though most are from south-west London.

Which one is your favourite? I think it has to be Delta in South Africa because of how we were treated. I had sent an email to this parkrun and was amazed I get a reply from the country manager, Bruce Fordyce, a legend in long-distance running in South Africa after he won the Comrades Marathon eight times consecutively in 1980s. Unfortunately, he was away the weekend my son and I were there, but his daughter Cara was Run Director and she came and collected us from our hotel at 7am (parkruns in SA start at 8am due to the heat), and then bought us breakfast afterwards, which we enjoyed with a few of the other runners. The run itself was hard as Johannesburg is at an altitude of over 5,000ft, so I took it very easy.

I’ve also met the country manager for Poland, Jakub Fedorowicz, many times. He was introduced to parkrun when he was living in Newcastle; it seems strange to hear a Georgie accent in Poland! He has worked incredibly hard with limited resources to make parkrun work in Poland, where there are now more than 40 different events, and we always get a warm welcome there.

I had a great time in Melbourne, too. Again, there was the usual parkrun welcome plus breakfast afterwards with a few locals and other tourists. It can help running at 8am, rather than 9am, mainly to avoid the excess heat but also to enjoy relaxing afterwards when it is still only 9am!
Tell us more about running parkrun in Poland…

A parkrun is a parkrun no matter where you are in the world. You get the same smiling faces and welcome wherever you go, though you might not understand the new runners briefing in the local language. However, the cakes aren’t always up to John’s standard. One exception was when we went to the 5th anniversary run in Gdynia when a local patisserie shopworker produced a delicious concoction. I always take a box of chocolates to share after the run and that seems to break the ice. There isn’t such a wide tradition of jogging in Poland, so the average times are quite fast. When I ran in Warsaw, I was the voluntary tailrunner, and went round in 33 minutes, compared to the 50 minutes that is more normal in the UK. There was a Polish regular at Wimbledon Common, Danuta Grabda, who used to bring her mother, Helena Zaremba, along when she was visiting. I met up with Helena when I was in Gdynia for their 5th anniversary run. Helena would be more self-conscious running parkrun in Poland than she was running at Wimbledon where there would be more people behind her. Also, they don’t have the concept of tail-walkers in Poland. The average run time in Poland is less than 26 minutes, whereas in South Africa it is over 40 minutes due to the large number of people walking, some taking over an hour to the run (she had also been there for my 300th and 401st runs). I knew my older brother and his wife would be there, they are both in the 100 club, and they persuaded my youngest brother to come for his first and only parkrun. I did not expect my cousin and his family to come up from Godalming for the run. My wife and children were also there to make 13 Harrises altogether. I had arranged for there to be a collection for Guide Dogs For The Blind, with two blind members of my Monday-night quiz team in the Alexandra pub there with their dogs and collection buckets. Windmilers Lynn Cox also brought her dogs and we raised over £750 for the charity. I also guided Lynn round to a course PB by nearly a minute; it was the 200th time I had volunteered at parkrun to go with my 500th run! A memorable morning celebrated with Prosecco and strawberries.

What was it like running your 500th parkrun?

It was a very special occasion. I collected my mother from her care home and brought her to the run (she had also been there for my 300th and 401st runs). I knew my older brother and his wife would be there, they are both in the 100 club, and they persuaded my youngest brother to come for his first and only parkrun. I did not expect my cousin and his family to come up from Godalming for the run. My wife and children were also there to make 13 Harrises altogether. I had arranged for there to be a collection for Guide Dogs For The Blind, with two blind members of my Monday-night quiz team in the Alexandra pub there with their dogs and collection buckets. Windmilers Lynn Cox also brought her dogs and we raised over £750 for the charity. I also guided Lynn round to a course PB by nearly a minute; it was the 200th time I had volunteered at parkrun to go with my 500th run! A memorable morning celebrated with Prosecco and strawberries.

Windmilers who also reached a milestone...

DAVID WOOD 50
VOLKER VOGLER 100
BRIAN McDERMOTT 100
LYNNE LLOYD 200
SUE ROTHWELL 300
JAYNE HURRELL 300

RIDDLESDOWN parkrun

Saturday 13 May saw 12 Windmilers head over to Riddlesdown, just south of Croydon, for this very pleasant (nearly) two-lap course over grass, gravel and stone with lovely views out over the countryside. There were 202 runners in total, including (left, l-r): Bronwyn Mayo, Claire Morgan, Andy Allan, Anas Hassan, David Wood, Clive Scammell, John Sabourin, Phil Tosh, Ella Waddingham, Sally Jones, Lisa Wood and Bernadette Maher Allan. Breakfast at The White Lion afterwards highly recommended.

Are you a parkrun tourist? Send us a report and photos of the ones you’ve run, so other club member can run them, too.

More parkruns overleaf >>>>
The highlight of our trip to Northern Ireland in June was taking part in the Portrush parkrun: the first beach parkrun in the world run entirely on sand. If you like parkrun and enjoy running on sandy beaches – it’s a must! Like our parkrun on the Common, the course changes with the weather, but Portrush has the added novelty of also changing with the tides. Facing the Atlantic Ocean, and being nearly as far north as Glasgow, there are some Saturday mornings when conditions can be challenging, and I can only imagine what it’s like on a rough day in January.

When we were there the sand was almost perfect, and you could run along the edge of the sea – or in it, if you wished – or anywhere along the wide but slightly sloping beach. While we may dither over trail or ordinary shoes, here no shoes is an entirely sensible option. It’s an out and back course and when we were running, a 22mph wind helped us along on the outward leg but presented more of a challenge on the run back to the finish. We were joined by ex-Windmiler Terry Eakin and his wife Pam, and the sea air and bracing run had given us a good appetite so we headed for the local café and a welcome breakfast; 10% off for parkrunners producing their barcodes!

In 2010, when we ran our first parkrun in Northern Ireland at the Belfast Waterworks, it was the only one in Northern Ireland – there are now 24. Alan Ladd, from Mallusk Harriers, had a bright idea: why not run all 24 in 24 hours? Together with his brother and seven other Mallusk runners, and inspired by Eddie Izzard’s 27 marathons in 27 days, Alan organised the ‘24-in-24’ as a charity event in memory of his late mother. This all took place the day we were at Portrush. They kicked off by running Derry City parkrun, which starts at 9.30am. About an hour later, they arrived at Portrush, the third parkrun, ran the course with the Run Director and sped off to be driven to the next run. In all, some 75 miles were run and, with the help of a team of drivers, around 350 road miles. The final parkrun was Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen. The target was to finish within 24 hours, which they almost managed, overrunning by just 45 minutes. I’m sure they were more relieved to finish than they were worried about missing the target by a few minutes. It was an amazing feat raising over £8,000 for Action Cancer.

There are 49 parkruns in the Greater London area…

**Portrush pr** Carters and Eakins before the off

**24-in-24** Three down, 21 to go, as runners leave Portrush

**The finish** Francesca approaches the funnel

**On the waterfront** It’s a parkrun, but not as we know it
One of my favourite marathons is 'The Poly'. It no longer takes place because of the number of main shopping areas the route went through; it was too dangerous. The real name of this race was the Polytechnic Marathon but was known affectionately to all runners as The Poly. For the 1908 Olympic Games at White City in Shepherd’s Bush, Polytechnic Harriers were invited to organise the marathon and it was decided to start the marathon at historic Windsor and finish in the stadium. It was this race that first set the distance at 26 miles 385 yards and Polytechnic Harriers decided to make it an annual event and so The Poly was born.

It was held from 1909 until 1996, with just a few cancelled races, including 1975 because of lack of support. Seems hard to imagine but it’s true, the next year there was a field of 100 runners, which was a large field back then. The course has changed over the years with the route finishing at White City until 1937, then in 1938 it finished at the Polytechnic stadium in Chiswick, where the finish was intended to remain. However, the Second World War deemed otherwise and a variety of courses in the Windsor area were used until 1946 when the course again finished at the Poly stadium. With minor changes in the route, things stayed the same until 1972 when a loop course around Windsor was used again for a couple of years. This was not so popular with runners, so again the finish was back at Chiswick.

The importance of this race is reflected in the list of starters over the years. Apart from many famous marathon runners and athletic officials, the race has been started by royalty on many occasions. The royals include two Kings (George V and George VI), two Queens (the Queen Mother when she was Queen in 1948, and the present Queen in 1962), Prince Philip and two Princesses (Margaret and Alexandra).

I first ran this race when it was a loop course around Windsor, but I much preferred the point-to-point course when it reverted to a Windsor-to-Chiswick route. The start line was on the road from Datchet into Windsor at the back of the castle and the course headed towards Old Windsor. Within the first mile of the route to Chiswick, we were running alongside the Thames looking across at part of the private grounds of the Windsor estate and at this point we were joined by about 20 members of the Honda Gull Wing Owners Club. They were going to assist with some traffic control at major junctions and it was wonderful to watch these purring machines glide by every now and then.

If we had stayed on this road we would soon have crossed the river and passed the ‘rear entrance’ to Windsor estate, which is the entrance used by members of the family when not on official business. This entrance also leads to the Frogmore Mausoleum where several royals are laid to rest. We turned off, however, before the river bridge and after going through Datchet were on quiet roads to Wraysbury where we headed for Staines.

It looked as if we were going to have to run around the busy one-way system through Staines but, thankfully, we were turned right down a quiet lane to the towpath. The route followed the towpath and under Staines Bridge before joining the road at the railway bridge over Laleham Road. After about a mile, we passed a garden centre on the left of the main building at which was about half the size of a football pitch and had a grass roof, I would not like to mow it.

Soon after, we ran through the pretty village of Laleham, past a 10th-century church and a very old signpost that has been preserved. On we went towards Shepperton and passed on our left a sign for the famous film studios before a surprisingly tough climb as the road went over the M25. Through Shepperton and a straight road to the wonderfully named Upper Halliford where the marshals did a great job getting runners across a very busy road (the road to Walton Bridge).

A little further on we passed some stables and fields on our left where some of the horses ran along parallel to the runners and seemed to be wishing us good luck, and soon after, we were back alongside the river through Lower Sunbury. We continued to the Thames Water treatment centre which used to rely on a steam-powered beam engine housed in its own building but now uses the latest technology.

We reached Hampton village at which point I was about a mile from my front door but had no thoughts of going home.

Just before we reached Hampton Court, the route veered left across Hampton Court Green to join the road to Kingston and its bridge over the Thames. As I ran along this mile-long stretch of road, I was overtaking the very slow moving traffic and indeed this road seems to be a permanent traffic jam during daylight hours. This road was one of the main reasons that the police refused this marathon a permit in the end – shoppers sitting in cars polluting the planet have a greater priority with the police! OK, I feel better now that’s off my chest – so back to the marathon.

After crossing Kingston Bridge, we turned left along the towpath then joined the riverside road and followed it to the main Richmond road. This we took almost into Richmond where we dropped back down on to the towpath for the next couple of miles. I have since run parts of this stretch of the towpath many times with the Windmillers’ Sunday morning runs and a few times during a marathon, the Thames Meander Marathon, which now starts and finishes at the sports centre where the Kingston parkrun begins.

After following the towpath under Kew Bridge, the race route left the towpath just before the railway bridge by turning up ferry lane, a footpath that led to the ferry that once crossed the river to Strand on the Green. This quiet little footpath leads to a noisy and polluted Mortlake Road that is part of the South Circular and was the least enjoyable stretch of the course. It was avoidable for the organisers who could have left us on the towpath until Chiswick Bridge but that would have meant a long flight of steps up to bridge level at about 26 miles, so they chose the South Circular option. We were not on the South Circular for long, but at mile 24, it was tough, before we turned left to head for Chiswick Bridge with its long, slow climb up, then down. It was nice to look down on the river with all the rowers out practising. The prize for getting to the top of the bridge was the sight ahead and to the left of the Polytechnic stadium where the finish line awaits. This stadium saw the marathon world record improved on no fewer than nine occasions during the life of this race.

So, after the downhill side of the bridge and a left-hand turn, we headed toward the stadium gates. Cross the road and through the gate and we hit the track where we turn right to run about 300 meters to the line. The last 50 meters are in front of the grandstand where supporters, organisers and the runners already finished are seated and a great reception is guaranteed. It was always a great feeling finishing at the same point where, in the past, the marathon world best was set.

The other great memory from this event is the goody bag, undoubtedly the best of any race. Sadly, this event is now defunct. If you ever meet someone who has run The Poly, they will remember it fondly.

I will leave you with a quote from Fred Lebow, co-founder of the New York City Marathon: ‘In running, it doesn’t matter whether you come in first, in the middle of the pack, or last. You can say, “I have finished”. There is a lot of satisfaction in that. Until next time... just a few more miles.'
While in New Zealand earlier this year, we ran the stunningly scenic (and rather hilly) Shotover Moonlight Half Marathon near Queenstown. The run was on trails and gravel tracks around the Ben Lomond sheep station with lots and lots (we gave up counting at 20!) of creek crossings, which were useful for cooling us down on a very hot day. We didn’t take this one massively seriously, concentrating instead on walking up the (many) hills and admiring the gorgeous Lord of the Rings-style views. I also spent far too much time taking photos! There is a marathon option as well, which sounds amazing and includes ladders and waterfalls to negotiate, but I’m a little put off by the fact that the male winner took 4 hours 51 minutes and pretty much fell over the line!
JOHN & FRANCESCA CARTER competed in two of the Circuit a peu Marina Alta series of 10k road races, now in its 21st year, held between February and June in the towns and villages along the Costa Blanca.

A week later, we were in Australia for the Rollercoaster Half Marathon, an hour’s drive from Melbourne. Somehow this race managed to be twice as hilly as the last one, with an epic 3,000ft of climbing, resulting in me setting a new personal worst time for the half-marathon distance(!) Starting at the top of the wonderfully named Mount Dandenong, the course headed steeply down on trails through eucalyptus trees full of cockatoos. A few fairly runnable undulating miles, and then the inevitable back up, up, up (and more up) the mountain, culminating in an epic and definitely-not-runnable 3k climb to the finish, where I refuelled by eating my bodyweight in watermelon.

I highly recommend both the Shotover Moonlight and Rollercoaster Half Marathons if you’re in the vicinity and fancy a challenge! The New Zealand one in particular is up there with the best races I’ve ever done.

Spain

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6 May: XV Cursa Popular Teulada ‘Teulada is between the sea and the mountains. A hilly 10k with an evening start to avoid the hottest part of the day. With over 1,000 runners, it’s noisy and great fun and the whole town turns out to cheer everyone on. The picture above shows me and Francesca wearing our home (or is that away?) strip with fellow Costa Blanca Striders before the start’

13 May: XXVI Cursa Popular Vila de Pedregeur ‘The race in Pedregeur is similar to Teulada but with more runners and more bands playing!’ John Carter
Getting ready
As we all know, marathons need preparation, but Sierra Leone needs more than most. Vaccinations, tick. Yellow fever certificate, tick. Malaria tablets, tick. Visa, tick. Hot yoga classes (optional), tick. Fundraising, tick. And that’s before you’ve even done any running! In a way, the training takes a back seat in this event, as it’s clear this is not a PB opportunity. Although there are winners, there’s no chip timing – in fact, it’s not timed at all, which is strangely refreshing.

The journey
Caroline, Stephen and I flew with KLM, who seem to have the friendliest stewardesses in the world, although I think they were bemused by the idea of us running in Sierra Leone. A large proportion of the passengers were headed for the marathon, so it was a great opportunity to meet other members of the group. There was a contingent of 16 from Putney Runners as well as a few from Barnes, so south-west London was well represented.

Arrival
It was dark and pouring with rain. We sat on a bus while more passengers and bags were loaded on than was physically possible and then waited for even more people who, apparently, had not been expected! All this meant we finally arrived at our hotel at 2am. We were told we’d be picked up at 6.45am for a trip to some villages in the north in 4x4s. As a result, we didn’t get a lot of sleep that night. The rooms were basic to say the least and my window didn’t seem to close properly, so I left the light on just in case of intruders climbing in…

Trips
The first two days were taken up with visiting some of the projects helped by the charity Street Child in rural and urban areas of the country. It’s very motivating to find out where your fundraising is going, and it was fascinating to go to different parts of Sierra Leone and to visit schools. Everywhere we went, people greeted us with dances, songs and (long) speeches.

On the Saturday, we had some workshops in the morning, where I learned some of the local language, Krio, such as ‘Aw di bodi?’ (How are you?) and ‘Di bodi fayn’ (I’m fine). This was to come in very useful during the race.

In the afternoon, we watched an inspirational amputee football match in the stadium where the marathon starts. This is a legacy of the civil war, which ended in 2002. During the war, some 27,000 Sierra Leoneans are estimated to have been made disabled or have had limbs cut off.

After the match, it was back to the hotel for a bucket shower and an early (or that was the plan but things take longer in Africa) dinner. It hadn’t been the usual marathon taper period, in that the days beforehand were full of activity, and carb loading was largely forgotten. Also, a lot of people were suffering from sickness and diarrhoea by this point. This wasn’t helped by the fact that one of the other hotels, aptly named The Sahara, had no water.

The start
It was a 4am wake-up call and time to gulp down some porridge (brought from home), hoping the power didn’t go off in the hotel as it often did, before being bussed to the start. The dilemma was whether to apply mosquito repellent because it was dark or sun cream because it would soon be light. At the stadium, we got a stern talk from one of the medics. He made it clear that, should anything really bad happen, it wouldn’t reflect well on the charity. He advised against running if anyone was unwell, which makes good sense, but I think it fell on deaf ears.

The race
And we were off! As the day dawned, the weather was overcast with some drizzle – ideal conditions. Caroline, Stephen and I started together, but I wanted to make some headway while it was still cool, so I pressed on. The first part of the race goes through the town, Makeni, and then along the main highway past numerous villages. Runners of the half and full marathons were together at this stage and I’d find myself running with someone, only to realise they were doing half the distance I was. Eventually, the others turned around and we marathon runners were on our own, marvelling at the lush green scenery.

I knew we’d be looping back at halfway, so I was keenly anticipating this as 13.1 miles came – and went! It was more than
14 miles along the undulating route before I saw the turning point. I stopped for some water (supplied in bags) and to take off my shoes to alleviate my painful toes, and then it was time to head back.

It was nice seeing people coming the other way, including Caroline and her husband Stephen, who had never run a marathon before. When I saw a big group of children by the road, I debated with myself before deciding to stop for a selfie. I’m so glad I did, because that photo summed up the race for me, and the kids were incredibly excited.

The race photographer was whizzing up and down the road on a motorbike by now, as was a film crew from Extreme Sports channel. I couldn’t believe I was competing in an event that fell under that description.

The last six miles
This was where it all started to get harder (even more so than usual). The course turned off the road on to dusty tracks and became a lot less easy to follow in the intensifying heat. At some points I found myself on my own (having promised my family I would not let this happen!) and unsure of my way, having to ask villagers ‘Is this the route for the marathon?’ They told me it was, but I suspect they would have said yes even if it wasn’t! The sun was becoming fierce now and I was keen to get to the end. And while I’m sure the water stop volunteers were trying to be helpful by saying ‘Only 2km to go’ when it was actually 5 miles, it was a bit frustrating.

The end
At the stadium, I was presented with my hard-carved wooden medal, which made it all worthwhile. I waited for Caroline and Stephen while icing my achilles in the medical tent. After the dire warnings from the medics, everyone survived, although six runners were taken to hospital to be rehydrated, one overheated at the finish and had to be put in a giant inflatable ice bath and our friend Karan had to cut short her race when her fingers started to swell up alarmingly and her rings needed to be removed as a matter of urgency.

The beach
The next day, we were bussed to the beach for a celebratory barbecue and a couple of days of recovery for those who’d booked the two-day extension. The hotel was luxurious, completely unlike our previous accommodation, and the white sand and palm-fringed beach lived up to its promise of looking like a Bounty ad.

By this time, I’d come down with the stomach issues that had dogged most of the group at some point, so having a convenient toilet was a plus point. Poor Ian still didn’t have his luggage, which had been lost by the airline, so was still in the rather odd attire he’d had to buy locally and wear during the race. As a veteran of the Sierra Leone Marathon, though, he took it all in his stride.

Home
We flew back via Monrovia in Liberia, then to Amsterdam where Caroline and I headed straight for slap-up feed (okay, a couple of smoothies). I think between us we’d lost quite a bit of weight. We both agreed that the trip had made us determined to have more adventures, so in that way it was life-changing. Sierra Leone is an amazing place to visit with a lot of tourist potential now that it has recovered from civil war and Ebola. However, at the moment, it would be difficult to travel there on your own. It was wonderful that the marathon gave us that opportunity, not to forget the fact that, as a group, we raised over £230,000 for a deserving cause.
Caen, France

The long weekend of 9, 10 and 11 June saw 16 Windmilers head off to Normandy, France, for the 30th anniversary of Les Courants de la Liberte (Festival Of Races For Everyone), run annually to celebrate D-Day, the allied invasion of Europe on 6 June 1944. All the runs take place around Caen, the first city to be liberated after D-Day, a city that was almost obliterated by heavy bombing and shelling but now rebuilt with many of the old buildings surviving. Around 18,000 runners turned up to run – and there was a race to suit everyone...

Le Credit Agricole Normandie 10k started at the Caen Memorial, home to a peace museum commemorating the Second World War and the Battle of Caen, an enemy bunker and British, American and Canadian memorial gardens. From here, at the top of the town, the course headed through the suburbs, past the Botanical Garden, down to the Hippodrome racecourse for one lap, past the Castle, the Men’s Abbey and to the finish at the Parc Expo. Windmilers who ran the 10k were John Sabourin, Andy Allan, Katy Berry, Melloney Johns and Sally Jones. Clive Scammell was course photographer.

On a race day of blistering heat, an early breakfast was had before setting out. Buses were available to take runners to the start of their races. Peter Metcalf and Guy Surtees, who had signed up to run the half marathon, decided to run out the six miles to the start, while others took the scenic bus route.

For the 10k runners, Melloney had worked out a 45-minute stroll up to the start of the run and then we had a (pleasant?!?) descent running all the way back down again. Andy was first Windmiler over the line in 49:31 followed by Katy in 52:05. There was plenty of food and drinks, including wine and beer, for all run finishers! Great T-shirts, too!

Other races held over the weekend...

- Marathon The Marathon started at Courseulles-sur-Mer, which, on D-Day, had the code name Juno Beach, a landing site for Canadian Forces. The course then proceeded along the coast via Sword Beach into Caen City Centre.
- Marathon Relay Team of four, each running part of the 26.2-mile distance.
- La Rochambelle A 5k women’s walk/run in aid of breast cancer, with runners dressed in pink.
- Les Rollers de la Liberte Two hours to do as many laps on rollerblades on a closed 2k circuit around Caen.

Le Foulee de la Liberte A children’s fun event.
La Pegasus Half started at the iconic Pegasus Bridge, the first bridge liberated by British soldiers. The course then went past the Café Gondrée, the first house to be liberated, past wheat, sunflowers and poppy fields and into Caen City Centre. Peter was first Windmiler over the line in 01:43 followed by Bernadette Maher Allan in 01:44:35. Other Windmilers who also ran this race were Alyson Young, Karen Crewe, Maria Kirkbride, Isabel Gwyther, Mike Banfi, Peter Strong and Nataliya Khromey.
It was a cunning plan hatched in the Crooked Billet in Wimbledon Village one evening after a few too many beers; Lee Williams and I had entered Ironman UK. The 3,800m swim, 181k bike and marathon 42k run seemed like such a good idea on that merrily intoxicated evening. Since starting to race triathlons, I have held a long-term ambition to qualify for the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, and this would be my second attempt (after missing the automatic qualifying slots by 10 minutes at Ironman Wales last year).

At 5:45am on a wet July morning, we were both lined up beside a lake with 2,000 other wetsuit-clad triathletes, wondering if we had made a mistake entering this race in Bolton rather than one of the alternative Ironman races in sunny Barcelona, Nice or Frankfurt. We were soon in the water for the swim start. The first lap of the lake was fairly uneventful and, following an ‘Aussie exit’ run, we were back in the water for the second lap. The second swim lap was much more dramatic; around a quarter of the way around the second lap I began to lap many of the slower swimmers who would swim a few strokes of front crawl before switching to breaststroke, accidentally kicking me in the face on several occasions.

After the second swim lap, I exited the lake having completed the 3,800m swim. I had a fairly smooth swim-to-bike transition, removing my wetsuit, goggles and swim cap and putting on my cycle helmet before jumping on my bike. The roads were wet from the overnight rain storms but, fortunately, there was only a little drizzle in the air as we started the 181k cycle. I built up to my target power range fairly quickly and from then on concentrated on keeping fed and hydrated. Much of the bike course had a lumpy elevation profile. There were two significant hill climbs which were each tackled twice (once on each lap of the cycle). These hills had the best support (apart for when I saw Lydia and my family!). The last hour of the cycle was tough as my legs started to feel weary. In the last 5k, I allowed my power to drop off a tad as I prepared for the second bike-to-run transition.

I had what I initially thought to be a slick bike-to-run transition, dropping off my bike, removing my helmet and slipping on my running shoes. However, having run around 10 metres out of the change tent, I then realised that my Garmin watch was missing from my wrist. Aarrgh, it was still in my transition bag! For a split second, I considered leaving my watch behind but wisely went back to collect it. This probably cost me 30-40 seconds in total, the annoyance played on my mind for a while.

Initially, my legs felt dreadful as I ran the short but steep climb out of transition. It was a relief when my watch indicated the first kilometer split as 4:30. Brilliant, I should allow myself to slow down a little! At 6k into the marathon, I needed another

Photos from the day David at the awards ceremony; Sharman and Williams running the 42k marathon; and Lee on his 181k bike ride.
pee so stopped off at the next available portaloo to relieve myself. I must have been gushing for around a minute and once back running, I quickly felt much better. After 10k of the run and another short but very steep climb, I had reached the loop section of the run course. The loop comprised a single out-and-back road which ran from the suburbs of Bolton into the town centre with a constantly undulating elevation profile. I walked most feed stations in order to ensure that I took on some water and calories. By now, the weather had turned much warmer; the early morning rain was a distant memory and it was now a case of pouring water over myself to take the heat out of the afternoon sun.

Some sections of the run hurt. Other sections of the run were hellish agony. There were several occasions when I needed to have a word with myself to stop negative thoughts from prevailing. At 35-38k into the run, I had my darkest moments on the long uphill drag out of town. Finally, I was running the section of the loop back into the centre of Bolton for the last time and limply attempted to increase my pace in the last kilometer to cross the finish line.

I had come joint 4th in the M30-34 age group and Lee finished with a cracking time of 1:27 hours and 37 minutes. We celebrated with pints in the ‘working men’s club’ around the corner from our accommodation. The next day, we went to the awards ceremony. Finally, it was confirmed that there were four World Championship slots in my age group and therefore I had qualified for Kona in October. Mission accomplished!

Congratulations to Mike Forder, Stephen Pallister and Phil Tosh who completed the Prudential 100-mile London BikeRide on 30 July. Mike writes: ‘I had a late start in the somewhat chaotic version at the back of the field! I was off at 9.02am so cycled to Richmond Station through Richmond Park to get the special train to Stratford and was told to get off the road as the first group of starters (which would’ve included Stephen!) was due through the park (in the opposite direction to me) very shortly!

As I reached the bottom of Richmond Hill, I met Tara and husband James (newish Windmilers). James was trying to mend a second puncture of the day having cycled from Wimbledon! He then ran with the bike on his shoulder cyclo-cross style, as I guided them to the station! He mended the puncture on the train but got two more later in the race! In fact, there were loads of people, flating all over the place, so I was lucky to get round without one – not least of all because I haven’t yet been to Lee’s class, so don’t know how to mend one!

James, Tara and I were almost the last wave off, started by Nicola Adams and Sir Chris Hoy. Great atmosphere with DJ/animator getting us all going.

I was very nervous of missing the cut-offs but the pace to Hampton Court was good on nice wide roads, so no problems with that. Out into the sticks around Pyrford and Ripley it was pretty crowded and I had to concentrate as people all over the shop. Then the first climb to Newlands started to sort ‘em out – lots of people walking it… and so on towards Leith, where there was a 10-minute hold-up about 4-5 miles before the start of the hill because of an accident. This had the effect of concentration everyone up so that pretty early into the climb it was chaotic – we twice ground to a halt completely on the way up and people were falling all over the place having problems clipping back in on the gradient.

Fairly uneventful up and over Box Hill and through Leatherhead, then I started to run out of steam a bit so had a nice sit-down and chat with the missus in Raynes Park before getting my teeth and getting up Wimbledon Hill. Good atmosphere through the Village and then on to Parkside and the best bit, the run down the hill into Putney, over the bridge and along the embankment – so great to crack along on the wrong side of the road!.

Sorry, the very best bit was All Bar One and a couple of pints! Not sure I’d do it again, but that’s what we all say after every marathon!
I’ve often thought of similarities between running and singing (there are differences). Despite what people think, everyone can do both. Training, breathing, learnt technique, preparation and posture are all key to both and when all put together correctly, can produce great results: individually for runners but singing, for an audience, too.

I sing soprano (the highest voice part) with The Cathedral Singers of Christchurch Cathedral Oxford (CSC) and with Wimbledon Choral Society (WCS), but in practice sing mostly with the latter.

Like running, singing has taken me around the world and I’ve made lifelong friends through it. When Roger (Clarke) and I lived in Rome and Riga, I joined local choirs and had a ball, despite not understanding a word! I even bought a Latvian National Costume for performing in song festivals (one of which required singing in all nine Nordic-Baltic languages).

My Oxford choir, CSC, sings the whole range of church ‘liturgy’ music (written for services), from early to contemporary, at funerals, Mass, Evensong, ordinations, weddings, etc. While Oxford Cathedral is the CSC’s ‘home’, weekends away to sing in Lichfield and Coventry Cathedrals are just two dates with CSC in the next year. We sing in blue cassocks under white surplices.

WCS mainly perform concerts featuring a range of contemporary music (some commissioned by the choir) and traditional choral music, again in some great venues including the Royal Festival Hall, Albert Hall, Cadogan Hall, Southwark Cathedral, Rome and more recently, Tallinn and Guilfest. The WCS website details upcoming events, but the next major one is on 18 November, at Southwark Cathedral, when we sing Handel’s epic Israel in Egypt with the lovely band Florilegium.

I intend to sing for as long as I do it well. Favourite singing moment? When I know the music, am with good singers and a charismatic conductor. Ecstasy! Favourite running moment? When it’s good running weather, away from roads, I’m dressed appropriately, have been running regularly, and it feels comfortable and enjoyable.

While training for the Brighton Marathon back in March, SUE BUNN was also working on a solo art exhibition. More recently, she exhibited some paintings and trees (more of these trees later) with four other artists at the Cass studio in Kingston, attracting club members to see her work. Sue paints in oils (many of which she mixes herself), and with acrylics, often adding a touch of gold and silver leaf. Her work is based on landscapes with an abstract quality, featuring trees and sheds especially old, imperfect ones. She is now also developing work in other media – for example, tree sculptures made with metal wire.

Favourite running moment? Sue joined the Wimbledon Windmilers in 2005 and recalls with pride running her first marathon, London, that year; she has since has gone on to run a few more. Her favourite running moment was finishing Brighton marathon this year: ‘I wasn’t sure I would make it to the start, so finishing was a bonus,’ she says. ‘A bunch of very vocal Windmilers at 23 miles really helped.’
I there's one thing
JENNY RAE likes it's to
be out of doors – and active.
She's a golfer, spending three
days a week playing at her
golf club, Coombe Wood.
The club advertises itself as
‘the friendliest club in Surrey’,
Jenny says, where she has
been a member for more than
10 years. Over these years,
she has got to know many
other players and even seen
the odd Windmiler.

Jenny is modest about her golfing
achievements, but admits to a handicap
of 25, and to winning several cups and
titles. Her name was added to the club
board after she won the Gerder Cup
knock out rounds and two final rounds
against Solveig (Jenny is on the left in the
photo). Jenny says that the
club is open to everyone,
offering two very practical
alternatives to wannabe
players: either club
membership or pay
as you go green fees.

Favourite running
moment? Jenny, a
Windmiler for over 20
years, a coach for several
of them, counts meeting her
partner, Jim, on one of the
club runs ‘years ago’ as her
favourite/memorable running moment. She
also values the ability to come back after
illness or injury and just enjoying running
with friends, however slowly!

Just like the world of running,
there’s a world of poetry
that ANAS HASSAN, the
Windmilers Chairman, is
gradually discovering and
being drawn further into.

He is not the only
Windmiler poet nor the first
to have written a poem about
running. Anas tells me that
ideas for poems are sparked
by people, events and places.
He will make some notes
when inspiration strikes,
undertake some research,
and then maybe, sometime
after, a poem will emerge
‘organically’. He also tells me
he has no writing regime and
that he might not write for two
or three weeks at a time, or,
alternatively, immerse himself
in writing for hours on end.

Like many others, Anas dabbled
in writing at school with the odd poem,
play and article for the school magazine,
but only started taking his poetry
more seriously in 2013 when he got
feedback and encouragement from
an established poet as part of a scheme
run by the Poetry School.

Anas enjoys writing poetry because of
its mixture of creativity and precision, and
the challenge of communicating in a very
spare, concentrated way – but at the same
time to pack a real emotional punch.

His skills were honed by working
closely with a mentor whose critical
feedback he values highly. He has
now had seven poems published in a
variety of poetry magazines. Recently,
he attended the launch in Brixton of his
newest pamphlet, ‘Bibi, Are You Living?’,
a collection of 17 poems published by
fellow Windmiler Sue Bunn on a recent
art exhibition, and is also interested in
commissions and readings.

To find out more about Anas’ fascinating
world of poetry, talk to him or visit
store.eyewearpublishing.com/products/
bibi-are-you-living.

Favourite running
moment? Finishing the Race to the Stones 100k
and winning a Capital Runners race in
Bushy Park.

A WORD OF THANKS… Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of The
Waffle. Deadline for the November newsletter is 21 October. Please send your reports,
articles and photos to waffle@windmilers.org.uk
Congratulations to those Windmilers who recently welcomed a new member to their family...

<< In March, Connie was born to Simon and Tamsin Newton, seen here with their 20-month-old son Henry.

>> Nick and Sophie McKay’s second child Edward arrived on 9 June, while their first son, Ben, celebrated his 4th birthday on 17 June.

A baby daughter was born to Julia Donovan and her husband Brian in May. Julia says: ‘I am delighted to announce that I gave birth to a little girl named Lucy Isla Donovan. She was born on 5 May at St George’s Hospital, weighing only 4lb (2kg), as she decided to arrive seven weeks early! We spent a few weeks in hospital, but are home now and Lucy is thriving! The consultant told us at her last checkup that she has long legs, so I have great plans for her running career already! The photos above show me in the hospital reading Runner’s World (pre-birth), little Lucy in the Special Care Unit and, finally, Lucy as she is now. I would like to thank all the Windmilers for their support and well wishes.’

Hokey Cokey keep-fit classes for the over 60s

‘You put your right leg in, your left leg out, in out, in out, shake it all about...’ Their PB days may be over but senior Windmilers still need to keep in shape. Francesca and John Carter, along with former Windmilers president Don Elson, are seen here at their over-60s Pilates class in Wimbledon Village.
IN THE PAPERS: Exercise – it’s good for you

Lots of research has been hitting the press recently regarding the health benefits of running. Titles such as ‘Do the odd jog? Don’t bother’ and ‘Only regular exercise can help turn back the clock’ have headlined some interesting pieces of scientific research that show the benefit of regular exercise to help ‘turn back the clock’.

Research is generally clear that high levels of physical activity dramatically slow up the ageing process by protecting against cell damage and, in some circumstances, can add up to a decade to a person’s life. It is also clear that the odd bit of exercise won’t cut it. To achieve the high goals, women have to do a 30-minute jog five days a week and men a 40-minute one to get the benefit.

We probably all know people who seem younger than their actual age and so it seems that the more physically active we are, the less biological ageing takes place in our bodies. This all seems linked to wonderful bits of DNA called Telomeres. It seems the older you get, the shorter your Telomeres, but the higher your level of activity, the longer your Telomeres, which gives you a biological ageing advantage of up to nine years over those who are sedentary, and a seven-year advantage compared with those who are moderately active.

Make of this what you wish, but the next time you’re not out running, perhaps spend some time looking up what these wonderful things can do for your body and browse some of the research.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER
Surrey Road Relays (midday start)
Contact team captains Norman and Keith at menscaptain@windmilers.org.uk or Kate and Julia on ladiescaptain@windmilers.org by 19 August to let them know you want to run

SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER Open Day on Wimbledon Common Help out at the Windmilers stall. Contact comms@windmilers.org.uk

SATURDAY 7 OCTOBER Track session with Mara Yamauchi Second fastest female British marathon runner comes along to coach Windmilers

SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER Christmas Dinner, Richmond Hill Hotel from 7:00pm til midnight
Tickets on sale now! Early bird £47.50 (available until Monday 2 October). Late bird £55; after-dinner £20.
To buy tickets, email social@windmilers.org.uk

#17MinutesForMe campaign

One of our coaches, Anna Desogus, was helping England Athletics and the charity MIND earlier this year. Anna took part in the preparations of the campaign #17minutesforme, which was launched in early June and is happening this summer in connection with the London Summer of Athletics. The campaign encourages people to find the time to get active for the mental health benefits of exercising. To find out more, visit www.17minutesforme.com. Anna also got involved with the Get Active Wandle Valley Project and is coaching a beginners running group in Morden Hall Park every Wednesday evening. Within this project, residents of Craydon, Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth are offered a number of various free classes, from archery, cycling, running and yoga to BMX, walking football and korfball. If you know someone who could benefit from these free activities, pass this link on to them: wandlevalleypark.co.uk/activewandle/
## WIMBLEDON WINDMILERS TRAINING SCHEDULE 1 Aug - 30 Oct 2017

To encourage everyone to run together, our weekly coach-led training offers fartlek, speed work and hill runs, and core stability following speed work at the Saturday track sessions. PROtrain are individually targeted sessions.

We also swim on Mondays and cycle on Wednesdays/weekends (check website for more details).

### THURSDAY 7pm
**Meet at Belgrave Hall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Park/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 Miles</td>
<td>Rushmere Park Pk 12 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 Miles</td>
<td>Rushmere Park Pk 10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>22Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 Miles</td>
<td>Rushmere Park Pk 15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 Miles</td>
<td>Rushmere Park Pk 20 mins</td>
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</table>

### SATURDAY 9.15am for 9.30am
**The Track in Wimbledon Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Park/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>(on the grass to the north of the track)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>Drills and Feedback on technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>Surrey Road League - Wimbledon 5k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26Aug</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>1600m x 2, 800m x 2, 400m x 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>02Sep</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>1 mile rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09Sep</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>Focus on form: 800m x 10, 1 mile rec Road Relays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16Sep</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>700m x 8; 1 mile rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23Sep</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>200m x 4, 1 mile rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30Sep</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>300m x 12, 1 min rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07Oct</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>200m x 2, 200m x 2, 1 min rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14Oct</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>Focus on form: 400m x 12, 1 min rec Cross Country - Wimbledon Common (men)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21Oct</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>1000m, 200m rec, 500m, 200m rec x 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28Oct</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>900, 800, 700, 600, 500m, 400 rec between each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### SUNDAY RUNS
**Meet at Windmill Car Park, Windmill Road**

10.00am **For Introduction to the Club and Social Runs for Mixed Abilities.**

- 3 Miles with stops, for re-grouping, usually led by a coach. Suitable for beginners and social runners.
- 5-7 Miles with stops, usually led by coaches. May stay on Common or go into Richmond Park.

9.00am 10-12 miles, led by coach Otwen. Suitable for all levels; fartlek session keeps group together. See web for details.

9.30am Runners meet to do longer runs (11 miles+) but these are not supervised by coaches.

### Coaching Advice

Speak to the coach on the night or contact the coaching rep: coaching@windmilers.org.uk

### Cross Country

**Men Team Captains:** Keith Lines & Norman Urique

**Ladies Team Captains:** Kate Carter & Julia Donovan

[www.windmilers.org.uk](http://www.windmilers.org.uk)