

STRIDING OUT

Appendix One 2006



The History of Goole Viking Striders

Continued.....

By Nigel Warner

My history of the Striders, "Striding Out", was printed towards the end of 2005 and quickly went double platinum, with as many as forty copies flying off the shelves. This appendix brings the story up to date, starting with the awards presented for 2005, and is simply a compilation of my reports to the Goole Times during 2006. They are also available on the website, as are some excellent photos including our year end production of Pirates of the Caribbean, starring Alan Bexon's bottom, at North Cave.





The reports do not include our camping weekend at Malham, which was treated to glorious weather and the proverbial good time was had by all. The campsite was full of rules and regulations, and you couldn't park next to your tent, but you can't have everything.

Membership stood at 69 at the end of 2006, having been guided through the year by the following committee:

President Roger Foster, Secretary Dot Pullman, Treasurer Nigel Warner, Membership Jed Stone, Race Director/XC Dave Hanney, Handicap League Julie Masterman, Social Karen Mitchell/Angie Dryden, Sponsorship/Website Graham Walker.



Malham 2006

ANNUAL AWARDS FOR 2005

The Viking Striders' Annual Awards presentation night at the weekend had a distinct touch of déjà vu about it, with several of last year's winners retaining their titles this year. The Fastest Runners in 2004 were **Simon Griffin** and **Karen Bexon**, and nobody could catch them in 2005 either, not surprising when you consider such performances as Simon's 59.06 for 10 miles and Karen's 38.50 for 10k. It was the same story over the country, with Simon's overall 2nd and Karen's overall 1st in the Cross Country League ensuring their retention of the titles in that discipline as well.

Last year **Julie Masterman** and **Mark Thompson** won the awards in the Most Improved Established Runner category, and few people thought that they would maintain their rate of progress to be able to win it again -- but they did. Mark was only seconds away from breaking 40 minutes for 10k and 90 minutes for a half marathon, while Julie's excellent 3.49 at the London marathon was just one of the highlights of her year.

Alison Hoggarth was a strong contender for the Most Improved award, but had the considerable consolation of the Marjorie Firth Trophy not only for her improvement over every distance but also for her outstanding performance at the 24 mile cross country event Rudolph's Romp.

The Most Improved Beginner sections were keenly contested. **Alex Davis** won the Men's title, mainly for a brilliant 46.27 10k, while **Julie Kaye** had to fight off a strong challenge from Marina Booth to land the Ladies' award. Both have had an outstanding season, with improvements at every distance up to Half Marathon.

Ray Smith deservedly won the Invercargill Trophy for the fourth time, this year for the small matter of running round a track for 16 hours to cover a distance of 100k, while **Nigel Warner** bagged the Club Person of the Year award, not for any athletic achievement but for writing "Striding Out", a history of the club from its inception in 1985 up to the present day.

Julie Masterman rounded off a great year by winning both the Multi Distance Handicap League and the Dryden and Kennedy 10k League. Mark Thompson was 2nd in the Multi Distance, with **Andy Masterman** 3rd -- Andy might have done even better but for injury cutting his season short.

All in all it has been an excellent year for the club, with an enthusiastic membership, a flourishing team spirit, and a lively social atmosphere second to none. Running ability seems almost irrelevant, but if anyone insists on running, the club still meets on a Wednesday night at 6.45 pm at Westfield Banks.

FEBRUARY: WELTON XC AND FERRIBY 10

The course at Welton for the latest round of the East Yorkshire Cross Country League is quite easy. In the summer, that is. At this time of year however a good downpour of rain turns it into a slippery quagmire on which, without the right shoes, it is very easy to lose the will to live.

Fortunately all the Viking Striders' leading runners were equipped with studs, and certainly the men's team had no difficulty in consolidating their overall third place in the league with another excellent third position on the day. The Striders may not be in the same class as Scarborough or City of Hull, but

they are more than holding their own against the others and more importantly, are dominating proceedings in the pub afterwards.

Simon Griffin led the way, as he so often does, in 8th place, with Martin Midgley and Martin Booth just outside the top 20. Alex Davies had a cracking run in only his second cross country race, clearly a great prospect for the future, while Graham Walker, making his off-road debut, slipped and slid through the mud with great gusto.

The Ladies' team was also 3rd on the day, which enabled them to hold on to fourth in the overall table. Julie Masterman's excellent 6th place paved the way for Kay Ryan and Patsy Fenelon also in good scoring positions, with the ever-improving Alison Hoggarth not far behind. Alison has been equally impressive on the road, her time at the recent North Ferriby 10 showing an improvement of a full six minutes in less than 12 months. North Ferriby is not the easiest of courses, but Mark Thompson also excelled with yet another personal best.

Cross Country times: 8th Simon Griffin 34.44, 22nd Martin Midgley 36.42, 23rd Martin Booth 36.58, 30th Dave Hanney 37.35, 34th Giles Harris 38.08, 37th Neil Bentley 38.37, 54th Mark Thompson 40.55, 57th Alex Davies 41.06, 77th Dave Ryan 44.29, 89th Richard Anness 47.28, 93rd Mick Fenelon 48.38, 97th Graham Walker 53.00.

Ladies Race: 6th Julie Masterman 41.36, 13th Kay Ryan 45.31, 17th Patsy Fenelon 47.53, 19th Alison Hoggarth 49.34, 28th Karen Mitchell 53.17, 29th Debbie Andrew 54.02, 30th Sandy Clark 54.35, 32nd Marina Booth 55.50, 34th Michaela Shepherd 57.09, 36th Jo Mouncey 61.36.

North Ferriby times: Martin Booth 64.39, Alan Bexon 66.05, Mark Thompson 67.39, Andy Masterman 72.16, Julie Masterman 72.41, Dave Ryan 75.20, Kevin Sipling 78.06, Patsy Fenelon 78.50, Kay Ryan 81.29, Alison Hoggarth 84.50, Julie Kaye 88.23, Debbie Andrew 90.53.

FEBRUARY: SNAKE LANE TEN

The Snake Lane Ten Mile Road Race at Pocklington always attracts a disproportionate number of top quality runners because of the fast course, so although the Viking Striders tried their best, it was no surprise that only the perennial Patsy Fenelon came away with a prize, second in her age category. However exactly half of a large Striders' contingent achieved personal bests, which speaks volumes for their effort and commitment, not to mention a shed load of winter training.

This was the first race in the club's 2006 Handicap League, and it threw up an unlikely front runner in the shape of Mick Fenelon. Mick, not to be outdone by Patsy and hindered only by the weight of his bus pass, knocked an enormous eleven minutes off his target time. The only one anywhere near him was Julie Masterman, who continues to amaze with her rate of progress.

Earlier on Giles Harris had led the Striders in, possibly for the first time but probably not the last, with Martin Midgley in hot pursuit. Alan Bexon, showing a welcome return to form, was in next, followed by an ever improving Martin Booth and a resurgent Andy Masterman. Alex Davies made a very promising debut at the distance, and it was good to welcome Keith Wilson back in Striders colours after too long an absence.

Striders' times (personal bests marked *):

Giles Harris 62.40*, Martin Midgley 63.30, Alan Bexon 63.55, Martin Booth 64.09*, Andy Masterman 64.35*, Neil Bentley 65.14, Mark Thompson 67.09*, Nigel Warner 68.46, Julie Masterman 71.57*, Alex Davies 74.46*, Dave Ryan 74.52*, Kev Sipling 77.05*, Patsy Fenelon 77.16, Keith Wilson 79.40, Graham Walker 80.13*, Kay Ryan 80.33*, Mick Fenelon 85.25, Sandy Clark 85.20, Karen Mitchell 85.55, John Kaye 87.18*, Rob Oldridge 87.18*, Alison Hoggarth 87.34, Debbie Andrew 87.54, Dot Pullman 88.59, Marina Booth 92.20*, Jo Mouncey 97.58.

MARCH: GRINDLEFORD 21, SPEN 20 & SEWERBY XC

Last Weekend's Grindleford 21, an off road event in the wilds of Derbyshire, involves a very, very tough course, during which the unforgiving terrain of that part of the world rises to a high point of some 2500 feet. With that in mind it was a great achievement for Dave and Dot Pullman, Sandy Clark and Alison Hoggarth to complete the course in just over 5 hours 22 minutes.

By way of a loosener Dave also ran the Spen 20 in West Yorkshire the following day, not an easy course in itself, but he did that in a shade over 3 hours, despite near blizzard conditions, to complete an exhausting weekend. Also at Spen, Keith Wilson's excellent 2.49 earned him first over 60 prize, and Patsy Fenelon returned a sprightly 3.12 as part of her marathon build up.

While all this was going on, the cross country brigade were contesting the final league race of the winter at a biting cold Sewerby. As expected the mens team finished third and the ladies fourth, both very respectable results given the high quality of the league. On the day Simon Griffin was 8th for the men, with Martin Midgley and Martin Booth also in top 20 positions, while Julie Masterman starred for the ladies with a battling 4th place. Both Julie and Patsy Fenelon won prizes in their age categories.

Sewerby times and positions (overall league standings in brackets for those doing the minimum five races to qualify):

8th Simon Griffin (5th overall) 35.51, 14th Martin Midgley (12th) 37.23, 18th Martin Booth 38.18, 26th Alan Bexon (22nd) 39.01, 28th Dave Hanney (17th) 39.14, 38th Neil Bentley (24th) 40.52, 42nd Nigel Warner (38th) 41.26, 43rd Mark Thompson (40th) 41.51, 61st Dave Ryan (55th) 43.36, 68th Ray Smith 44.56, 75th Richard Anness (60th) 47.27, 79th Mick Fenelon (61st) 49.54.

Ladies: 4th Julie Masterman (6th overall) 42.20, 12th Kay Vickers (9th) 49.26, 19th Karen Mitchell 54.04. Patsy Fenelon and Sandy Clark, who didn't run Sewerby but did the previous five races, were 13th and 15th in the League table.

APRIL: LORD MAYOR'S 10K, SHEFFIELD

The grandly titled Lord Mayor's 10k, run from Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield, was an extra event thrown into the Viking Striders' racing calendar specifically to celebrate Jed Stone's 60th birthday. Jed is held with great affection by the Striders, mainly because his quiet unassuming nature is devoid of the outspoken cynicism which can be common in men of his age, and the fact that 21 Striders ran the race is testament to that.

Many of that number chose to run the event as a Fun Run, so Sheffield was a PB-free zone, but certainly the first six club members to finish had plenty to be happy about. Martin Midgley, Alan Bexon and Martin Booth, although outside their best, did well enough for 4th position in the team competition, no mean feat in a field of over 700 finishers. Karen Bexon has been out injured for several months but bounced straight back with first over 40 prize in a time only a minute and a half outside her all time best.

Keith Wilson and Mark Smith didn't get PB's either, but Keith's time was simply outstanding for a man who passed Jed's landmark some time ago, and Mark hasn't run the distance that fast since 2002. Jed himself, running with several Strider groupies, was well outside his best, but it was his day and nobody cared about that.

Striders' times:

Martin Midgley 38.18, Alan Bexon 38.24, Martin Booth 38.49, Karen Bexon 40.18, Keith Wilson 46.42, Mark Smith 53.09, Alison Hoggarth 54.28, Debbie Andrew 54.30, Jed Stone 54.46, Patsy Fenelon, Graham Walker, Dave Pullman, Julie Masterman, Gary Mitchell all 54.47, Sandy Clark, Karen Mitchell, John Kaye, Mick Fenelon all 55.49, Marina Booth and Dot Pullman both 56.51, Michaela Shepherd 57.48.

Footnote: Everybody ran wearing yellow t-shirts emblazoned with "Uncle Grumpy's 10k" on the back. I couldn't run on the day but I bought the t-shirt, which I daren't wear just in case someone thinks I'm Uncle Grumpy. As if.

APRIL: DONCASTER HALF MARATHON

Well over 300 runners contested last week's Doncaster Half Marathon, but for once only a handful of them were Goole Viking Striders, who as usual met with varying degrees of success.

Mark Thompson led the way for this small but not necessarily perfectly formed band, with the satisfaction of a new personal best time but also the disappointment of not going under 90 minutes for the first time. He is perfectly capable of breaking this barrier, and as all the best coaches will tell him, just needs to run faster. Ray Smith, with nothing to prove from a long running career, was next in with his quickest time over the distance since 2002.

Keith Wilson did well in his first Half for the club for more years than he cares to remember, while Richard Anness looks to be coming back to fitness following injury. John Kaye, by his own admission not exactly built for speed but with all the determination in the world, just failed in a heroic attempt to beat two hours. Patsy Fenelon meanwhile was winning first prize in her age group. The fact that she was the only one in that category should not detract from the quality of her performance.

Striders' times:

Mark Thompson 90.29, Ray Smith 100.16, Keith Wilson 104.58, Patsy Fenelon 105.06, Richard Anness 106.08, Alison Hoggarth 119.07, Debbie Andrew 120.05, John Kaye 120.48, Jo Mouncey 135.17.

APRIL: FLORA LONDON MARATHON 2006

Eight Goole Viking Striders came back from last week's London Marathon with the usual tales of triumph and disaster, thankfully more of the former than the latter.

Triumph certainly for the Flying Doctor Giles Harris, who broke the 3 hour barrier for the first time, and also for the senior members of the squad Keith Wilson and Patsy Fenelon, who were both delighted to be comfortably inside 4 hours. This was Keith's first marathon since turning 60, and by the look of him he will have no trouble extending his marathon career past 70. Patsy just goes on and on, and that's just talking about the race, never mind doing it!

Gary Keenan was the happiest of the marathon debutants, with an excellent sub 4 hour time, but Nina Hanney can also be very proud of a battling performance taking into account her youth and almost total lack of long distance road racing experience.

Other good efforts came from former sub 3 man Dave Pullman in his umpteenth marathon, and also Simon Griffin, who seems to have temporarily abandoned his quest for a 3 hour time despite being well capable of it.

The only disaster really came from Mark Smith, who recorded a personal worst by some margin. Everyone's allowed at least one bad day at the office, although it has to be said that stopping for a cigarette en route isn't highlighted in many coaching manuals as an aid to performance.

Striders' times:

Giles Harris 2.59.28, Simon Griffin 3.15.00, Gary Keenan 3.47.00, Keith Wilson 3.48.17, Patsy Fenelon 3.51.12, Dave Pullman 4.01.10, Nina Hanney 5.32.00, Mark Smith 5.36.00.

APRIL: ROTHWELL 10K

Last week's Rothwell 10k Road Race attracted a quality field of over 700 runners, partly because, with the start and finish being in different places, the course actually boasts a net descent of some 30 metres. Only six of that number were Viking Striders, but since half of them recorded personal bests, it was definitely a case of quality not quantity.

Julie Masterman was a close contender for this week's star prize with a PB by over a minute, but the winner must be Karen Bexon, whose PB won her 1st Over 40 in a very high class field. Karen has only been training again for a few weeks after being sidelined through injury for months, so her performance was even more exceptional because of that.

Mark Thompson completed the hat-trick of personal bests but was disappointed not to break 40 minutes, while earlier Alan Bexon had led the Striders in with his best run for over 3 years.

Striders' times:

Alan Bexon 37.29, Karen Bexon 38.41, Neil Bentley 38.48, Mark Thompson 40.04, Nigel Warner 40.32, Julie Masterman 41.29.

MAY: BEVERLEY 10K AND ASKERN 10k

With three races in eight days, this time of year is as busy as it gets for the Viking Striders, whose supreme athleticism holds them in good stead for whatever punishing schedule is thrown at them. The third race, the strangely titled Mucky Duck multi terrain event in Driffield, will be fully detailed next week, but for now the two 10ks at Beverley and Askern hold centre stage.

Beverley is best attended, with over 1000 runners in total, but Askern, possibly because it's the faster course, attracts more Striders, with nearly 30 competing this year. Martin Booth, whose 50th birthday earlier this year has given him a new lease of life, led the Striders in at both venues, snipping three seconds off his personal best at Askern as he went under 38 minutes for the first time. Andy Masterman isn't back to PB form as yet but was impressive at both races as he continues his comeback from injury, but the week was remarkable for the fact that his wife Julie for once didn't get a PB either!

The PB king at Askern was Alex Davies, who knocked over three minutes off his previous best. Alex doesn't race very often but certainly makes an impact whenever he does, perhaps he should do it more often. Karen Bexon beat 40 minutes yet again and was 2nd in her age category, while Kevin Sipling, Michaela Shepherd and Carol Bugg all came away with excellent PBs. It's a long time since Mark Smith has run two races in a week, but he finally put London behind him as he recorded cracking times in both, as indeed did Jo Mouncey, who was seconds away from a PB.

Beverley times: Martin Booth 38.04, Andy Masterman 38.58, Mark Thompson 40.38, Julie Masterman 42.35, Graham Walker 48.10, Jed Stone 49.52, Mark Smith 52.18, Alison Hoggarth 52.50, Joanne Mouncey 57.55.

Askern times: Martin Booth 37.59, Alan Bexon 38.37, Andy Masterman 38.44, Dave Hanney 39.11, Karen Bexon 39.49, Mark Thompson 40.11, Nigel Warner 40.44, Julie Masterman 42.33, Alex Davies 43.20, Ray Smith 44.06, Kevin Sipling 45.00, Keith Wilson 46.24, Richard Anness 46.53, Graham Walker 48.53, Patsy Fenelon 49.10, Steve Mallinder 51.09, Jed Stone 51.56, Karen Mitchell 52.02, Mark Smith 52.17, Roger Maguire 52.37, Rob Oldridge 53.06, Debbie Andrew 55.21, Michaela Shepherd 55.22, Carol Bugg 55.22, Dot Pullman 55.25, Jo Mouncey 56.13, Caroline Walker 60.33, Gary Mitchell (personal worst, injured) 60.52.

MAY: DRIFFIELD MUCKY DUCK

The Viking Striders have been doing this race for years, but still no light can be shed on how it got its name. What is definite is that the race is quite a tough eight and a half miler starting and finishing at Driffield Rugby Club, the course being fairly undulating with a short cross country section thrown in to stave off boredom.

For some of the Striders (Martin Booth, Andy and Julie Masterman, Mark Thompson, Jo Mouncey) it was their third run in eight days, and for most of the others it was their second race in a five day period, so one or two could be forgiven for being a shade lacklustre.

The top individual performances of the day came from Martin, who led the Striders in yet again, and Karen Bexon, who won the ladies race comfortably as she did last year. The real stars however were of the collective variety, the men's and ladies teams both winning their respective competitions. To

put this feat into perspective, this is quite possibly the first time the Striders have done this in over 20 years of racing!

With the first three to count, the triumphant men were Martin, Andy and Alan Bexon in 13th, 15th and 17th places, while the victorious ladies were Karen, Julie and Kay Ryan in 1st, 3rd and 18th positions. Great stuff.

Striders' times:

Martin Booth 54.51, Andy Masterman 55.12, Alan Bexon 55.20, Karen Bexon, 57.06, Nigel Warner 60.03, Mark Thompson, 60.08, Julie Masterman 60.32, Dave Pullman 65.46, Kev Sipling 65.53, Keith Wilson 66.20, Richard Anness, 68.30, Kay Ryan 69.25, Alison Hoggarth 75.52, John Kaye 79.40, Dot Pullman, Debbie Andrew and Karen Mitchell all 80.09, Jo Mouncey 87.42.

JUNE: RIVER BANK CHALLENGE

There might have been a few spots of rain later on, but generally last Sunday was as warm as it always is for the Striders' annual River Bank Challenge. This year nearly 200 runners converged at Westfield Banks to run the now famous course of about one third marathon distance, incorporating the river bank between Goole and Boothferry Bridge, and thanks to Race Director Dave Hanney and a willing army of helpers the day passed without a hitch. Thanks also to the various sponsors of the event, especially Boyes and Bonsor Recruitment, and to the St Johns Ambulance.

The day started with the Fun Run, won in fine style by Ben Fawcett for the boys and Kerrie Page for the girls, then in the main event last year's winner Pumlani Bangani, of Salford Harriers, raced to victory again in a fantastic time of 46.26. The Striders' lead runner Andy Masterman had a great run to finish in 55.04, but he and the rest of the field were blown away by Bangani's class. Most of the Striders were in fact on marshalling duties but that didn't stop the leading ladies from securing another team victory thanks to the ever reliable Karen Bexon in 2nd overall, the ever improving Julie Masterman in 3rd, and the ever talkative Patsy Fenelon in 11th!

The first three Striders men (Andy 16th, Alan Bexon 21st and Martin Midgley 22nd) would have been 2nd in their team competition if a prize had been awarded for 2nd place, which it wasn't. Alan had the consolation of a prize in his age category, as did Martin Booth who is continuing his rich vein of form. Greg Harris made a rare appearance for the club and indeed would have come away with a prize himself, if only one had been awarded for 152nd place. Which it wasn't.

By the way, apologies to Alison Hoggarth, who had a brilliant run on Sunday but whose excellent 51.59 at Askern recently, one of three races that Alison did in a week, went totally unremarked by this writer.

Fun Run top ten: 1st Ben Fawcett, 2nd Richard Mainprize, 3rd George Marwood, 4th George's dad Dale, 5th Alex Binnington, 6th Kerrie Page, 7th Georgia Byas, 8th Gordon Stevenson, 9th Chelsea Walker, 10th Nicole Masterman.

Main Race: 1st Pumlani Bangani 46.26, 2nd Trevor Wilks (Leeds City) 48.19, 3rd Jonathan Carter (Kingston upon Hull AC) 48.36, 4th and Over 40 winner Richard Pattinson (Pudsey & Bramley 49.01, 5th

and Over 50 winner Stephen Rennie (KuH) 49.41. Malcolm Packer of Louth and Peter Rowland of Doncaster won the over 45 and over 60 prizes. The Men's Team prize went to Askern DRC.

Ladies: 1st Kirsteen Young (Leeds City) 56.55, 2nd Karen Bexon (GVS) 57.37, 3rd Julie Masterman (GVS) 60.26. The over 35 and over 45 prizes were won by Zoe Coates of Driffield and Carol Davies of Rothwell.

JUNE: EDINBURGH MARATHON

Last weekend's Edinburgh Marathon, being run for the fourth time, is fast becoming a major event on the road racing calendar, and this year attracted in excess of 4000 runners. You wouldn't expect a course north of the border to be flat, and so it isn't, with the last three miles being uphill just when aching legs are screaming for mercy. Added to that, conditions were hot and sultry, so it was a surprise that only five runners ended up in hospital with a further 72 requiring medical assistance of one sort or another.

Against this backdrop, the performance of the Striders' lead runner Julie Masterman was simply sensational. Her 3.28.04 gave her not only 10th place in her age group, a massive achievement in a quality field like this, but also automatic qualification for London next year. Julie has worked hard for this, but all the training miles in the world come to nothing unless you have the mental toughness to see the job done.

Julie's husband Andy and Richard Anness were also competing for the Striders, finishing in very creditable times of 3.29.15 and 4.21.31 respectively. Neither are at their best having had injury disruptions, and certainly neither would begrudge Julie her five minutes of fame from an outstanding effort.

JUNE: HUMBER BRIDGE HALF MARATHON

Over 1000 runners contested the recent Humber Bridge Half Marathon, including a willing band of a dozen Viking Striders who mostly struggled to cope with high temperatures and a far from easy course. The race starts on the Hull side of the bridge, then goes across to Barton for a circuit which accounts for most of the 13.1 miles, including a hill at 9 miles which seems to go on for ever, before going back across the bridge to finish in the Bridge car Park.

Giles Harris led the Striders in with an excellent personal best in 26th place. Andy Masterman wasn't far behind in 34th, but it was another Masterman Masterclass from his wife Julie which really caught the eye. First in her age group, 7th lady overall, and yet another massive personal best, once again confirmed her status as the Striders' fastest rising star. And the bad news for the other Striders' ladies? Julie's getting better all the time.

Striders' times: Giles Harris 84.49, Andy Masterman 87.11, Simon Griffin (injured) 90.54, Julie Masterman 96.01, Nigel Warner 98.14, Ray Smith 100.55, Kev Sipling 103.27, Keith Wilson 107.55, Mark Thompson (also injured) 111.00, Patsy Fenelon 112.41, Alison Hoggarth 116.01, Greg Hipkiss 140.35.

JULY: WALKINGTON 10K

I had intended to send a report to the paper on both Walkington and Laxton at the same time, since they happened within a few days of each other. However the Laxton times took so long to appear on the website the report never got written. Write your own story based on the times below.

Striders' times: Giles Harris 37.55, Andy Masterman 38.16, Alan Bexon 39.54, Karen Bexon 40.48 (3rd overall, 1st Over 40), Mark Thompson 42.24, Nigel Warner 42.38 (2nd Over 55), Ray Smith 44.32, Julie Masterman 45.14 (2nd Over 40), Keith Wilson 48.41, Richard Anness 50.21, Patsy Fenelon 51.06, Graham Walker 53.03, Alison Hoggarth 53.03, Mick Fenelon 54.29, Karen Mitchell 56.29, Debbie Andrew 57.12, Marina Booth 58.19, Michaela Shepherd 60.20, Jo Mouncey 60.43.

JULY: LAXTON 10K

A certain James Clark from Pudsey Pacers won this race, with Striders filling the next eight positions! How dare he rain on our parade!

Striders' times: Andy Masterman 37.24 (2nd overall), Giles Harris 37.27, Martin Booth 39.47 (1st Over 50), Martin Midgley 39.53, Dave Campbell 40.11, Alex Davies 41.13, Nigel Warner 41.26, Mark Thompson 42.10, Ray Smith 44.01, Neil Bentley 45.02, Keith Wilson 47.08, Lee Woad 49.34, Steve and Daniel Durose 49.50, Dave Pullman 51.02, Mick Fenelon 53.21, Rob Oldridge 54.24, Steve Mallinder 55.12, John Kaye 59.55.

Ladies: Julie Masterman 44.08 (1st overall), Caroline Parkes 48.59, Patsy Fenelon 50.03, Alison Hoggarth 52.01, Karen Mitchell 54.20, Marina Booth 55.01, Carol Bugg 55.13, Jo Mouncey 57.04, Michaela Shepherd 57.30, Dot Pullman 57.43, Carren Jackson 61.02.

SEPTEMBER: GREAT NORTH RUN

Last week's Great North Run was the biggest half marathon in the world, with fifty thousand runners making it to the start line and thousands more sitting at home having had their entries knocked back. Yet at first glance the reasons for NOT doing the race seem compelling.

For a start the entry fee is three or four times more than a normal half marathon, and to be added to that is the cost of a long journey to the North East. Also the traffic congestion in the area before and after the race is legendary, and the people congestion is worse. The field stretches so far back that competitors have been known to give up before they reach the start line!

Having said all that, the attraction of the event is undeniable, as illustrated by Steve Durose doing it for the 18th time despite running with an injury which any other day would make stopping in bed the sensible option. Steve was joined by eight other Striders, none better than Andy and Julie Masterman, who achieved a rare husband and wife one-two for the club. They weren't far off their personal bests either, an excellent effort in a start so crowded that getting a move on is almost impossible.

Striders' times:

Andy Masterman 84.16, Julie Masterman 93.52, Dave Hanney 96.00, Kevin Sipling 102.10, Steve Durose 113.39, Alison Hoggarth 115.05, Graham Walker and Jed Stone 117.50, Rob Oldridge 129.13.

SEPTEMBER: ROBIN HOOD MARATHON & HALF MARATHON

While the rest of the country was delighted to bask in the continuation of the Indian summer over the weekend, the 8,000 runners who converged on Nottingham for the annual Robin Hood Marathon and Half Marathon were hoping for cooler conditions for their exertions. It looked as though they had got their wish to start with, but right on cue when the gun went off, the sun came out and the races were run in baking hot temperatures. Adding to that a far from easy course, with a revised route throwing in even more hills than last year, and you have a recipe for potential disaster.

The Viking Striders need not have worried. They sent three of their best runners, plus Dave Pullman, to contest the marathon and all acquitted themselves brilliantly. Dave of course is a sub 3 hour man in younger days, and although this was a personal worst, he would be the first to acknowledge that his pre-race training regime, or lack of it, was not designed to break world records.

Martin Booth could have chosen an easier race to make his marathon debut but although he struggled a bit in the later stages and was slightly disappointed with his time, this was an excellent effort full of promise for when he tackles a flat course on a cool day. Andy Masterman is more experienced at the full distance, and it helps when you know what you're letting yourself in for, but on Sunday he ran superbly to help himself to a personal best by over 10 minutes. Andy will surely join the sub 3 hour ranks before long.

The performance of the day however was that of Giles Harris. Having sneaked under three hours at London, we knew he was good, but not this good! To knock another four minutes off that time in those conditions was simply sensational, but there it was in black and white, 21st place out of 1118 marathon finishers. Even Giles, who doesn't list modesty as his main attribute, didn't know where it had come from. To put his time into perspective, this was the best time by a Strider since Alan Bexon in 1993.

The Half Marathon was tough enough in itself, and what a relief to peel off to the finish when the already suffering marathon men had to battle through another 13 miles. The Striders generally suffered in the heat with everybody else, but although Graham Walker did well to be close to his best, and Mark Thompson and Keith Wilson ran good races, Alison Hoggarth was the undoubted star with over a minute sliced off her PB, a fantastic effort in the conditions.

Marathon times: Giles Harris 2.55.31, Andy Masterman 3.18.18, Martin Booth 3.31.06, Dave Pullman 4.23.23.

Half Marathon times: Mark Thompson 93.47, Nigel Warner 95.17, Keith Wilson 103.19, Alison Hoggarth 111.09, Graham Walker 113.32, Richard Anness 114.38, Karen Mitchell and Dot Pullman 124.25, Debbie Andrew 127.56, Marina Booth 134.30.



Andy Masterman at Robin Hood Marathon (Simon as support) – September 2006



'The Martins' at Robin Hood Marathon (Midgley as support) – September 2006



Dave on his way to a personal worst – Robin Hood Marathon 2006

SEPTEMBER: SELBY HALF MARATHON

A warm and humid day on Sunday saw nearly 500 runners contest the annual Half Marathon at Selby. It wasn't ideal conditions for running, but try telling that to the Masterman family, who once again were the brightest stars in the Viking Striders firmament. Andy led the men home with a time nearly four minutes faster than his previous best, while Julie's leading lady performance brought her a PB by three minutes. And this on a day when no other Strider was anywhere near their best, which says a great deal about the hard work being put in by the Mastermans. Nondescript

Ray Smith did well, breaking 100 minutes for the first time in four years, and as always Patsy Fenelon won a prize in her age category, second on this occasion. Patsy's last prize was last week in the Bawtry Forest Trail Race, which the Striders' Karen Bexon won in fine style.

Striders' times at Selby:

Andy Masterman 83.31, Alan Bexon 87.29, Mark Thompson 92.34, Nigel Warner 92.56, Julie Masterman 93.04, Ray Smith 97.30, Dave Ryan 106.50, Patsy Fenelon 106.50, Alison Hoggarth 116.52, Debbie Andrew 121.16, Jo Mouncey 137.23.

OCTOBER: CLUMBER PARK 10K

Last weekend's Clumber Park 10k was run in the most scenic of locations, although from a runner's point of view it's difficult to appreciate the majesty of your surroundings when you're out on your feet with exhaustion. Conditions on the day were good but the course is by no means easy, with numerous twists, turns and undulations in the forest, so the Viking Striders came back with no personal bests to report.

Simon Griffin, however, despite not being at his best, still managed 11th place overall out of nearly 800 finishers, and Martin Booth also did well with 24th place overall and 2nd in his age category.

In terms of the club's handicap league, Julie Masterman was closest to her target time, although John Kaye was difficult to ignore with easily his fastest 10k of the year. Mark Thompson and Karen Mitchell scored useful points in the league, and Dot Pullman also ran strongly to record her year's best.

Striders' times:

Simon Griffin 37.01, Martin Booth 39.03, Alan Bexon 40.58, Karen Bexon 41.07, Mark Thompson 41.16, Nigel Warner 41.56, Julie Masterman 43.00, Ray Smith 44.56, Richard Anness 49.12, Patsy Fenelon 49.20, Graham Walker 50.10, Mick Fenelon 51.42, Alison Hoggarth 52.19, John Kaye 53.17, Karen Mitchell and Dave Pullman 53.24, Dot Pullman 54.05, Debbie Andrew 54.54, Marina Booth 56.00, Michaela Shepherd 57.55, Jo Mouncey 59.45.

OCTOBER: BRIDLINGTON HALF MARATHON

Only six Viking Striders ran last weekend's Bridlington Half Marathon, out of a large field of over 650 finishers, but what they lacked in quantity they certainly made up for in quality.

Martin Midgley was back to form at last as he posted his fastest time for four years and the second fastest by a Strider this year. Martin Booth also ran well in his first Half of the season, following up his excellent second place in the so-called "Supervets" category at Clumber Park.

All the other Striders achieved season's best times, Julie Masterman again being the pick of the bunch as she clipped over a minute and a half off her previous personal best on her way to third place in her age group in the Yorkshire Championships section of the race. (Julie shot past me at about 6 miles as though I was waiting for a bus!)

Ray Smith did his best time since 2002, while Kevin Sipling knocked nearly a minute off last month's Great North time. Nigel Warner won the over 55 prize in the Yorkshire Championships, which can only mean that entries in that category were few and far between.

Unfortunately Sandy Midgley couldn't make the start line, although having had the runs all night it was a shame she couldn't muster one more!

Striders' times:

Martin Midgley 83.58, Martin Booth 87.54, Julie Masterman 91.24, Nigel Warner 92.11, Ray Smith 97.14, Kevin Sipling 101.24.

OCTOBER: BISHOP WILTON XC, RACE 1 2006/07

Never is the onset of winter more sharply brought into focus than by the start of the East Yorkshire Cross Country League, that ordeal by cold and mud which has around 150 runners from eight of the region's top clubs flocking to it as though they enjoy it. The average runner, of course, with the memory of a goldfish, thinks he has enjoyed it when he reflects on his performance in the warmth of the pub, but it was certainly difficult to take pleasure from last Sunday's first leg at Bishop Wilton, with its incessant climbs, ankle deep mud and a near vertical downhill plummet to the finish.

The Viking Striders' mens team, not on top form but getting there, started this year's league pretty much as they finished the last one, in a very creditable third place but with little or no chance of catching the powerful teams from City of Hull and Scarborough. Simon Griffin was the Striders' top man again, although Giles Harris ran well and Martin Booth was only just outside the top 20. It was also great to see Steve Lund, for whom the phrase "diamond geezer" was coined, back in action after his operation as he walked the course in under 75 minutes, not much slower than the last runners.

The ladies had a tougher time of it, with Karen Bexon struggling with injury but nevertheless battling to 6th place. Julie Masterman was only seconds behind, but it was down to these two to carry the team against the likes of Beverley, who had all their three counters in the top ten. Patsy Fenelon's solid contribution meant that at least the ladies finished with a respectable fifth place after this first race.

Striders' positions and times:

Men: 7th Simon Griffin 40.59, 13th Giles Harris 42.45, 22nd Martin Booth 43.52, 33rd Alan Bexon 45.16, 36th Dave Hanney 45.33, 44th Nigel Warner 46.54, 57th Mark Thompson 48.46, 60th Neil Bentley 49.13, 92nd Richard Anness 57.28.

Ladies: 6th Karen Bexon 47.55, 7th Julie Masterman 48.05, 29th Patsy Fenelon 58.53, 33rd Dot Pullman 61.45, 43rd Karen Mitchell 66.34, 45th Jo Mouncey 71.53.

OCTOBER: HALTEMPRICE 10K

Over 300 runners contested last Sunday's Haltemprice 10k, following an undulating course through the leafy suburbs of West Hull. This was a surprisingly large number in view of the fact that the organiser doesn't advertise the event because he doesn't want too many people turning up! The field included 21 Viking Striders all of whom finished comfortably within the hour, well almost comfortably.

Giles Harris led by example with 13th place overall and a new personal best by nearly half a minute. He was joined on the PB list by Michaela Shepherd, Carol Bugg and Caroline Walker, not quite so far up the field but putting in just as much effort.

Julie Masterman and Nigel Warner won their age categories, and Patsy Fenelon was 3rd in hers, but the biggest smile of the day was worn by Dave Pullman, who sneaked in almost unnoticed with a season's best performance to bag a quite magnificent trophy for 3rd in his group.

Yet according to a runner from Nafferton, Dave was not the only hero of the day. Tim Booth had been trying to break 50 minutes for a 10k for years, but last Sunday he met up with the Striders' own Jed Stone. Tim writes, "To my astonishment he picked up the challenge and picked up the pace to help me through. My lungs were fit to burst with 1k to go and I felt the energy disappearing from my legs. We rounded the corner for the final straight with 500m to go, with shouts of "Go for it!" to push me along I dug deep and found the energy to push myself through the line to record 48.39! I would like to convey my sincere thanks to this guy who provided the support and encouragement to help me achieve something I was beginning to feel would never be. This has also convinced me that I should join a club, and that with the right attitude anything is possible."

So well done Jed, whose entertaining company has spurred many a runner to go as fast as possible. Just to get away from him!

Striders' times:

Giles Harris 37.01, Alan Bexon 40.30, Nigel Warner 40.59, Mark Thompson 41.45, Julie Masterman 42.29, Ray Smith 46.32, Dave Pullman 48.19, Richard Anness 48.37, Jed Stone 48.51, Graham Walker 49.31, Patsy Fenelon 49.48, Mick Fenelon 51.31, Karen Mitchell 53.21, Steve Mallinder 53.59, Dot Pullman 54.25, Debbie Andrew 54.55, Michaela Shepherd 55.06, Carol Bugg 55.08, Marina Booth 55.34, Jo Mouncey 57.26, Caroline Walker 59.56.

NOVEMBER: GUY FAWKES 10

No report submitted, probably because I couldn't be bothered, which was a shame from the Flying Doctor's point of view because Giles did the fastest time by a Strider over the distance in 2006.

Times: Giles Harris 62.05, Julie Masterman 72.50, Ray Smith 79.13, Patsy Fenelon 85.29.

NOVEMBER: DREWTON WOODS XC, RACE 2

The East Yorkshire Cross Country League circus moved on to South Cave last Sunday, attracting a new record attendance of 175 runners all eager to get dirty in the name of sport. The Drewton Woods course is well known to many of the Viking Striders through regular training runs, although in this case familiarity breeds not so much contempt as a healthy respect for the terrain and its degree of difficulty.

There were signs of improvement in both the Striders' teams. The ladies, with Karen Bexon, Julie Masterman and Kay Ryan leading the way, scored exactly the same points as in the first leg, but contrived to go up one place in the overall table to fourth because of the inferior performance of other teams.

The men on the other hand stayed in third overall but showed one or two individual improvements. Simon Griffin was up to an excellent 5th place while Giles Harris also snatched a top 10 place following his fireworks at last week's Guy Fawkes 10, where he recorded another personal best of 62.05. Martin Midgley's promising 23rd position made up for the first leg, when he showed a total disregard for the Striders' cause by selfishly going on holiday.

Striders' positions and times:

Men: 5th Simon Griffin 41.02, 10th Giles Harris 42.18, 23rd Martin Midgley 44.28, 33rd Alan Bexon 45.37, 34th Dave Hanney 45.52, 51st Mark Thompson 48.17, 55th Neil Bentley 48.46, 88th Ray Smith 54.01, 100th Dave Pullman 58.30, 105th Richard Anness 60.13, 109th Rob Oldridge 61.35, 110th Mick Fenelon 61.42.

Ladies: 7th Karen Bexon 48.51, 8th Julie Masterman 49.04, 27th Kay Ryan 48.50, 33rd Patsy Fenelon 60.18, 38th Alison Hoggarth 62.38, 39th Dot Pullman 63.37, 43rd Sandy Midgley 64.39, 45th Karen Mitchell 65.28, 49th Debbie Andrew 67.41, 50th Michaela Shepherd 67.42, 51st Marina Booth 67.57, 55th Jo Mouncey 73.55.

DECEMBER: LANGDALE END XC (RACE 3) & RUDOLPH'S ROMP

I don't know how they do it, but every year without fail, Scarborough AC, who organise the Langdale End leg of the East Yorkshire Cross Country League, arrange for millions of gallons of mud to be piped in to obscure much of a course already difficult because of the steep gradients common to that area. Because of the mud, in certain places you plant your foot down not knowing whether you will hit hard rock or sink in up to your knees, and running with any sort of rhythm becomes impossible.

Having said that, you won't find anyone to say they didn't enjoy it, certainly not amongst the Viking Striders gathered in the warmth and conviviality of the Moorcock Inn afterwards. Some performances suggested the Striders thrived in the tough conditions, with Simon Griffin leading the way for the club as always, Martin Midgley having his best race of the season in an excellent eighth place, and Neil Bentley at last showing some form to come through for the final team scoring position.

The league continues to be dominated by City of Hull and Scarborough, but the Men's team consolidated their very creditable third place overall. On the Ladies' side, however, because of injuries and unauthorised absences Kay Ryan was left alone to fly the flag, which she did magnificently but on her own Kay could do little to prevent the team slipping to last but one on the day, and that only because Selby Striders failed to field anybody at all.

Of course some legs were still tired from the previous week's Rudolph's Romp, a small matter of 24 cross country miles organised by the Long Distance Walkers Association and centred on Brantingham near Hull. Although Martin and Simon led the way here as well with very quick times, Marina Booth on her debut at the event coped brilliantly with a far from easy course, and Collette Leetham provided further evidence of her return to fitness.

Langdale End positions and times:

4th Simon Griffin 45.56, 8th Martin Midgley 48.27, 13th Giles Harris 49.07, 21st Alan Bexon 51.05, Dave Hanney 51.06, 35th Neil Bentley 53.30, 52nd Mark Thompson 57.20, 54th Nigel Warner 57.54, 67th Ray Smith 60.03, 78th Richard Anness 64.36.

Ladies (or rather Lady) 13th Kay Ryan 62.15.

Rudolph's Romp times:

Martin Midgley 3 hours 15, Simon Griffin 3.16, Nigel Warner 4.08, Craig Taylor 4.30, Richard Anness 5.00, Collette Leetham and Ray Smith both 6.07, Dot Pullman, Karen Mitchell, Sandy Midgley and Marina Booth all 6.10.

ANNUAL AWARDS FOR 2006

Two names, **Giles Harris** and **Julie Masterman**, deservedly dominated the Viking Striders' Annual Awards ceremony last Saturday, although Julie struck a blow for the female of the species by edging it in the number of trophies won.

There was no-one to touch either in terms of improvement during 2006, both achieving a string of personal bests at all distances to win the Most Improved categories. Two of the highlights of the year had to be their outstanding marathon performances, 2.55 for Giles in Nottingham and Julie's 3.28 in Edinburgh.

This was the third time in succession that Julie had won the Most Improved Female award, the first time that anyone has ever done this in Striders' history, and such is her determination to succeed that no-one will bet against it happening again next year. Julie also won the female Cross Country title as well as first places in the Handicap League and the Dryden and Kennedy 10k League, just to round off her successful evening.

Nobody could follow that, but Giles came close as he was adjudged Male Runner of the Year for his consistently fast outings at all distances. Last year's winner **Simon Griffin** was an obvious contender but although his season was ravaged by injury there is no-one to touch Simon's strength over the country, and his fitness during the winter months was enough to give him the Male Cross Country award.

Karen Bexon was the Female Runner of the Year for the third time, a bit ironic because Karen is out long term injured, but her performances when fit were clearly way ahead of the pack (although Julie is coming up fast on the rails) and we can only hope for her speedy recovery.

The Beginner of the Year trophy was a bit of a surprise. The winner **Keith Wilson** is the wrong side of 60 but has been out injured for so long that he can safely be called a beginner again! His performances during the year left many a younger runner in his wake, as did the Veteran Runners of the Year **Patsy Fenelon** and **Nigel Warner**. This is a new award to recognise the increasing average age of the club; Patsy was well out in front for the ladies but Martin Booth and Alan Bexon were close contenders for the men.

Steve Lund was a very popular winner of the Invercargill Trophy, having shown extreme courage and determination to fight his way to fitness having had a back operation so serious that just walking again

has been a monumental effort. Steve now walks cross country races nearly as fast as the runners! Another popular choice was **Graham Walker** for Club Person of the Year, mainly for his outstanding efforts in obtaining sponsorship and organising the club website, while **Richard Anness** won the Marjorie Firth trophy for an excellent series of races, again coming back from injury, including the Edinburgh Marathon.

Handicap League runners up: 2nd Giles Harris, 3rd Mark Thompson, 4th Keith Wilson, 5th Karen Mitchell.