The Green Runner

August 2026

The South Downs Relay edition:

WE'RE BETTER WHEN WE DO IT AS A CLUB

Chairman's Report

Although it is still summer, thoughts are already turning to our 10k race that is scheduled for the 10th January 2027. Plans are well underway and we will be using the same course as the last 4 years as this has proved very popular. If you can offer any help in the run up to the event then please contact Sara Bamberger our Race Director. This could be general offers where we can find you roles or if you have something specific you can help with then please don't be shy in coming forward.
We will also need significant support on the day and would, as in previous years, ask any member entering to identify someone else who can marshal or provide other help on the day. Last year was the first year we were not part of the HRRL series of races, but it didn't seem to impact our popularity as we sold out in record time, and we have this year decided we wouldn't put ourselves forward for the series.

Another great turnout at the Lakeland event in Ambleside where we had more than 20 Stubbies either running or supporting, promoting the club some 300 miles from home!

The club relay was brilliantly supported by everyone, and it was great to see 7 teams battle it out for the honours and bragging rights. The organisation of our 2 captains Sara and Kieran ensured that we had a great day on a day that the weather was so kind to us – although maybe better for the supporters than the runners! Lovely to see so many at the Milburys having a celebratory rehydration. Hopefully elsewhere in this newsletter you can read what the runners thought about the event.

We are hopeful that we will see the return of our Fish and Chip handicap in September so please look out for details about this. Please remember watches are banned so if you need them for Strava purposes just put it in your pocket and leave it there until you've crossed the finishing line.

Finally, our Annual Celebration Evening is scheduled for Saturday 14th November at Solent Hotel and it would be lovely to see as many members there as possible. Again, more details will be published soon.

Have a great rest of the summer.

Happy Running
Kevin

Your Committee

Chair	Kevin Ashman
Vice-Chair	Louise Tanner
Secretary	Julie Dinwoodie
Treasurer	Sarah Barron
Club Coach	Mike White
Ladies Captain	Sara Bamberger
Men's Captain	Kieran Chaplin
General Committee	Stacey Read.
	Marcus Lee
	Gail Osborne

Your Coaches

Club Coach: Mike White:	Tuesday evenings
Frances Lord:	Thursday evenings
Lisa Donn:	Wednesday evenings (in place of Sarah)
Louise Tanner:	Monday evenings plus Friday morning hills
Sarah Barron:	Wednesday evenings
Tom Mellor:	Monday evenings

Mike Smith (soon to be the latest coach – Tuesday morning sessions

Advice from the coaches

As we are heading for yet another month of heatwave, Francis' tips on how to manage running and training in the heat is so important to take heed.

Be Prepared for the HEAT

When the temperature rises, it's even more important as a runner to look after yourself. A little preparation can make the difference between enjoying your run and struggling through it.

It is all obvious, and mostly common sense:

- **Get enough sleep;** Your body copes much better with heat when you're well rested.
- **Eat a sensible, balanced diet** to keep your energy levels up.
- **Keep yourself hydrated at all times, not just before a run;** Drink regularly throughout the day. Remember that alcohol dehydrates you, no matter how many pints you consume. (Dehydration is a major part of a hangover.)
- **Wear appropriate clothing;** loose fitting light coloured running kit will keep you much cooler than figure-hugging or dark colours.
- **Protect yourself from the sun**. Wear sunglasses and /or a peaked hat to help you see clearly and apply sunscreen to exposed skin.
- **Plan your run wisely**. If you don't have to run in the hottest part of the day, DON'T. Get out early or later in the evening, choose a shady route, where possible, or stay home and wait for cooler weather. This is wise NOT lazy.
- **Remember that you will sweat (or glow) more**; In hot weather you'll sweat much more, so adding a little extra salt to your meals can help replace what you've lost. You'll often notice the difference in how you feel.
- **Take fluids on longer runs or races**. Carry plenty of fluids and consider using some electrolytes. Drink little and often rather than waiting until you're thirsty. At races to cool off, I will soak my hanky at water stations and pour some of the water over my head and back.
- **Adjust your expectations**. In hot weather, everyone slows down. Leave your PB for another day, run to the conditions, and enjoy the rare opportunity to run in the sunshine!
  Most importantly, listen to your body. If you start to feel dizzy, nauseous, unusually fatigued, or stop sweating, slow down, find some shade, and don't be afraid to cut your run short. There will always be another day to run.I

Members Articles

SOUTH DOWNS RELAY – TEAM CAPTAINS REPORTS

TEAM 1 – Chaffing The Dream – Captain Julia Lawton

The relay set off at 9 am with Pete Tugwell running leg 1 for the team. He did an impressive run and was relieved to get it completed first, and he got us into first place.. go Pete!

Second leg was run by Jack Strougler an excellent runner, but was run into second place by an impressive run by Mike White! Jack said he struggled with the heat but still an impressive run. The baton was then passed to Nick Kimber for leg 3.

Nick was a last-minute stand-in as two previous runners withdrew from this leg. He ran a cracking leg and kept second position.

Baton was then passed to Captain Julia for leg 4 at QE, and she was quite nervous about the leg and having sneaky peeks behind whilst climbing Butser to see if she could see any green hunting her down!! Kept the pace up once on level ground and kept second place!

Baton was then passed to Evan de Wet at the Sustainability Centre for leg 5. Evan admitted in the car he had only run one 5km this year… what?!! 🤣 .. but he did get round in one piece, and this has now spurred him on into getting back into his running again. He finished in 6th place, handing the baton onto Andy Donn to do the final leg.

Andy felt the pressure was off at this stage so went out to enjoy the leg and we eventually finished 6th place out of 7 teams. Well done to my excellent teammates; you were a joy to be with, and it was a fun day out on the South Downs 👏👏👏

TEAM 2 – "No interest in running for leadership" – Captain Mike White 3rd
What a day, the club relay on the South Downs is just brilliant! This year I was determined to do an easy leg because the day before I had a 100km Gravel Bike event on Salisbury Plain. For one reason or another though, it was leg 2 for me again. Yippee! 1.5ml uphill start followed by steep ups and downs all the way to Harting. Actually, my guilty secret is I really enjoyed it, mainly because I had someone to chase, catch and spit out the back! (Sorry Jack). This day is less about running achievements though and more about supporting each other and/or having the micky taken in equal measures so as always, it's just great fun! Here are a few paragraphs from my fellow runners - *Mike White*

After previous years running leg 2, I was looking forward to the easier ranking leg 1. Not being familiar with this leg, I asked some of the club veterans their thoughts. Generally, the feedback was 'there's a bit of a hill at the start, but once you're up, it's plane sailing '... Setting off at the start line with everyone, of course you're going to take it easy up the first hill and not burn out. I was pleased to be first up the hill though, but was quickly caught by Pete T. We exchanged the lead a few times along the top, but Pete's downhill proved better than mine as he disappeared in the last km. As the wall of green shirts and cheers greeted me, I was extremely pleased to hand the baton to Captain Mike for leg 2 in 2nd place – *Matt Emery*

The relief when Mike White told me he had ridden an off-road bike race for 4 1/2 hours the day before meant the pressure was off and I could just take my leg steady...But when he came speeding through the change-over point at Harting in first place, my shock and adrenaline obviously kicked in! The last time I felt like a chased rabbit was back in primary school. Jokes aside, it was a great day out. I love that everybody, no matter how fast or slow, took part. The camaraderie between the teams over the whole day was brilliant to see. I look forward to next year's rendition! – *Lyndsay Precious*

When I put myself forward as a reserve for the Club South Downs Relay, I had the thinking that if I was a late callup I could assess my fitness and decide whether I was ready to take on a leg of the race as I was just attempting to return to some running after 2 months out with a knee injury, little did I know I'd be called up on the same day! I requested a leg without any downhill to protect my knee as much as possible, so leg 4 it was. On the day I'd seen Mike hand over to Lyndsay at Harting Down in the lead so I pretty much knew I'd be starting my leg at QECP in 1st place; how much of a lead I had I didn't know; I should have known it would be a good one! I took Mike's advice and jog/walked up Butser Hill, I knew if I looked back from the top and couldn't see the next runner I'd be fairly safe, which I did, I still took the necessary walking breaks that my lack of fitness required but got to the finish at the Sustainability centre as quickly as I could, finishing chuffed that I'd held on to the lead. All in all a great day. – *Jon Leigh*

I covered Leg 5. I'm lucky to have been drafted in as a last-minute replacement, and I absolutely loved the whole experience. I began my leg with a nice lead but was unfortunately caught by an opponent who clearly had motorised running shoes as she flew up that last hill. We still managed a podium place so that topped the day off nicely, along with a cold beer – *Carl Schafer*

Leg 6 has always been tough but this year even more so. For me it wasn't about whether we finished first or last, it was just about being back out there again with the green army. I felt the lack of fitness kicking in very early on, and as I saw Steve Matty disappear into the distance, it wasn't long before Tony caught me going up Beacon Hill. Stuart caught me up as I was taking in some water at the farm and he very kindly supported me home. I fully appreciated him and everyone else cheering me on at the finish line, and thanks to Stuart's sportsmanship, I struggled across the finish line in 3rd. Another great day out and thanks to everyone for the support – *Ed Hare*

TEAM 3 – Green Legs & Hamstrings – Captain Chris Cullen
Team members (in running leg order):

1. Wendy Cumes
2. Chris Cullen (c)
3. Nick Crane
4. Frances Lord
5. Glynne Parsons
6. Tom Hastings

Our team cars were split between legs 1-3 and 4-6.

Leg 1 – 5.2m, Wendy
We arrived in good time for the start of leg 1, although I briefly took a wrong turn at Chichester. Wendy started the race for us with the early incline onto the Downs (115m elevation gain) before meeting Nick and me again at the A286.

Leg 2 – 6.3m, Chris
I was grateful for the lower temperatures compared with earlier in the week, although it was forecast to get warmer. I had to stop for a vehicle shortly after beginning leg 2 but then got moving again. I caught up with a few people, but Dan Foster came past me with around 500-600m to go.

Leg 3 – 5.7m, Nick
The temperatures were gradually increasing when Nick set off from Harting Down (good idea with the frozen water bottle). While waiting at the QECP finish point we saw a few other Stubbies finishing a different XC event. Nick came in soon after on the fast downhill to hand over to Frances.

Leg 4 – 4.0m, Frances
Frances made good progress with the sustained climb up Butser Hill before continuing towards the Sustainability Centre to hand over to Glynne. I was away at the changeover time, apologies.

Leg 5 – 3.7m, Glynne
Glynne set off for Leg 5, which initially has a rutted and root-filled downhill stretch. The rest of the team gathered at the finish point on the ridgeline, but the trees hid the runners as they moved through Meon Springs. The temperature was at least in the mid-20s by this point. Glynne came into view going up the 500m-long incline leading towards the ridge and handed over to Tom.

Leg 6 – 7.2m, Tom
Tom had the honour of tackling Leg 6 and the cambered incline of Beacon Hill (west). Wendy, Nick and I went to the crossing at Exton while Frances and Glynne moved to the finish at The Milbury pub. After meeting at Exton, we met Tom once more at the gate leading towards Lomer Farm to provide water and then continued to the race finish.

It was great to take part in this again, having missed it in 2025. Well done everyone! Looking forward to next year.

TEAM 4 – Fast, Faster & Fabulous Take on the South Downs Way Relay! – Captain Jacqs Healy 2nd

What a day! Fast, Faster & Fabulous took on the South Downs Way Relay and came away with an incredible 2nd place finish!

Jacqs kicked things off on Leg 1 (a big change from her usual Leg 5!), handing over to speedy Jon on Leg 2, Adam powered through Leg 3, our Derrick smashed Leg 4, Rachel flew around Leg 5, and Toby heroically brought us home on Leg 6.

The race had everything—glorious sunshine, challenging hills and some absolutely stunning scenery

A huge part of the day's success was the brilliant communication in our WhatsApp group. Including travel logistics video using toy cars and little figures, making it easy (and entertaining!) for everyone to know where they needed to be.

There were plenty of memorable moments, including carefully escorting Toby across a busy road to make sure he didn't get squished 😬, waving to cows, seeing fish in a stream, making new friends, learning new places and how refreshing a finishing drink can be 🤩

Crossing the finish line in 2nd place was a fantastic reward for everyone's hard work, teamwork and determination. And, of course, the prize of chocolates was very well deserved... and the best part? We don't have to share them!

TEAM 5 – Green and Bear It – Captain Keiran Chaplin

Team Preparation

The Green and Bear It relay team approached the event with a well-structured training regimen. Team members participated in regular group runs (these may not have actually taken place, but some training did happen), focusing on endurance, speed, and baton handover techniques. (More route reccies may have helped). The team demonstrated excellent camaraderie and commitment throughout the preparation phase (we all congratulated Katie on her Island swim, commiserated with John and Andrea on their injuries and welcomed their replacements Phil and Alistair), which contributed to a positive team spirit leading up to race day.

Race Day Overview

On race day, the team assembled promptly, ensuring all members were well-prepared and properly equipped. The weather conditions were favourable, with mild temperatures and clear skies (not sure how AI knows this as I didn't tell it where or when the race was), allowing for optimal running performance. Each runner displayed enthusiasm and professionalism whilst awaiting their turn for the relay handover.

Individual Contributions

- **First Leg Giota:** (lovely to make your acquaintance): Set a strong pace from the start, positioning the team within the leading pack. Demonstrated excellent control and stamina over the opening segment.
- **Second Leg Alistair W:** (last-minute stand-in, great runner, not so good at following the route plot from Kieran's watch): Maintained the momentum, expertly handling the baton transition. Showed impressive speed, narrowing the gap with the front runners. (Loved it so much he ran an extra mile or so).
- **Third Leg Phil T:** Tackled challenging terrain with determination. Adapted well to minor changes in route (this is a complete fabrication by AI. Phil knew where he was going and set about chasing down the rest of the teams), keeping the team's position competitive (we wish).

- **Fourth Leg Katy B**: Delivered a powerful finish, overtaking several teams in the last stretch (sadly, despite her best efforts, there was no overtaking). Displayed strong sprinting ability and composure under pressure.
- **Fifth Leg Sarah** 😎 did her best. Finished sounding like a wounded rhinoceros wheezing up that hill.
- **Final leg Captain Kieran**. A gargantuan performance on the longest leg of the day, with his back in spasm.

Team Results

The Green and Bear It relay team completed the course with a commendable overall time, securing a top placement amongst participating teams (no, no. We finished last). The collective effort and smooth baton exchanges contributed significantly to their success. The team's final standing reflects their dedication and effective teamwork.

The team's final standing reflects dedication and doing our best for the sake of the team despite knowing that the rest of the field was beyond catching. Everyone gave their all, laughed together and had a great day. We made new friends and spent time having fun together.

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

- Strengths: Cohesion, strategic pacing, seamless baton handovers, and positive team morale.
- Areas for Improvement: Further refinement of handover timing, targeted speed work for mid-race legs, and additional practice on challenging terrain.

Recommendations

For future relay events, it is recommended that the Green and Bear It team continue their group training sessions, focusing specifically on baton handover drills and endurance runs. Incorporating interval training and simulated race scenarios may further enhance performance. Regular team meetings to review tactics and share feedback will help sustain the team's competitive edge.

Conclusion

(A great day was had by all. It's not always about the win.)

TEAM 6 – The Runner Has Beans: Sara, Dan, Dom, Steve, Abi and Steve. Captain Sara 1st Leg 1:
This leg is always my favourite – even with the much-loved hill start, but it does mean it's over and done with and I can then turn my attention to supporting my team members and the other teams. We started the day at Littleton Farm, and as I was preparing for my start, taking my gel and visiting the much-loved toilet there, our Leg 4 runner (Steve) was tucking into toast with chocolate spread on it. At that point I did wonder if I had made a bad choice starting off with the first leg.
We were soon started by Teresa, and there was THAT hill; it is certainly one that just keeps giving. I started steady and saw some of the other team runners slipping ahead of me – but knew to keep it steady and then hunt them down on the nicer part of the course, and this is what I did. I was pretty much neck and neck with the runner who was in 3rd place. On the amazing downhill section, she slipped just ahead of me – and then struggled to open the gate, so I managed to open this and sprint away – age is more on her side, so right at the finish she got one footstep ahead of me. I was happy finishing in 4th place, and then I knew that I was handing over to Dan, who would be well up for chasing down that 3rd place.
With my leg done, attention was then turned to helping Teresa navigate to the other handover points and cheer on our team. It was another great club day out and so good to see some new faces joining in.

Leg 2:
The weather was certainly kinder than it had been recently. It was much cooler on the start line, although once the racing got going, I soon forgot all about that! This relay was my first proper race back after a frustrating six-week injury layoff, so I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I hadn't been doing much running, let alone racing, so I was just happy to be back pulling on the club vest. I was on Leg 2 for the team. Having run it before, I knew it wasn't going to be my favourite route, but the aim was simple: hang on to as good a position as possible. I set off in fourth place, with Alister starting around 30 seconds ahead of me. It didn't take too long to reel him in and move us into third, and from that point my mission was to defend that position. The first couple of miles were mostly uphill, but I managed to settle into a good rhythm. Once we reached the woods the route levelled out, and I was able to keep the pace going, only easing off occasionally to double-check the signposts; I wasn't taking any chances of getting lost……or so I thought. Miles five and six reminded me exactly why I don't remember this leg too fondly. The climbs became steeper, and my "running" gradually turned into a very determined power walk. Then came the moment I'll probably remember most from the day. On the penultimate climb, I reached a junction and simply refused to believe the route went straight ahead. The path in front looked ridiculously steep, so I convinced myself the left-hand path had to be right. About 400 metres later, it became painfully obvious that I'd made a spectacular navigation error. Back I went. After retracing my steps, I slowly made my way up what can only be described as a cliff. At the top I stopped, completely unsure where I was going. Thankfully, Chris appeared over the hill like some sort of South Downs guardian angel and pointed me back onto the correct route. Without him, I genuinely think I'd still be wandering around the Downs today! I followed Chris down the hill, although by now he was disappearing into the distance. With about a mile to go, I started closing the gap again, only to lose him once more every time another hill appeared; he was still running them while I was very much embracing the walking strategy! Then I glanced over my shoulder and spotted John closing in. That was all the motivation I needed. After a few stern words with myself (and picking my bottom lip up off the floor), I found one last gear. With around 800 metres to go, I switched into turbo mode and pushed hard all the way to the finish, managing to keep the team in third place. Despite the unexpected detour, aching legs, and a few moments of questioning my life choices, it was another brilliant day out with the club. Great running, great company, and a reminder of why these relay events are always such a highlight. Already looking forward to doing it all again next year, although hopefully I'll remember which path to take!

Leg 3:
OK, I shouldn't be here. Well, that's not strictly true; I should be. I was down for leg 3, but with The Slow Downs. However, due to various unexpected diary clashes and last-minute injuries- swollen ankles and swollen knees- I ended up a Has-bean. Actually, quite appropriate, although was I ever a was? So, it's a glorious morning, and we're waiting for the leg 2 runners to come up over the hill at Harting Down. First Mike, then Jack. What's happened to Dan? Finally, he comes down the track closely followed by Chris. I grab the baton, and off, thinking I need to get some blue water between myself and Nick Crane just behind. Down the hill I'm trying not to run the walkers or cyclists off the hill, yet hoping Nick Crane behind gets delayed that little bit more. One thing I can still do is run downhill, so I go full speed downhill and just survive the ups. Over five miles or so, I don't hear any footsteps behind and still manage to force a smile as I pass Johnny Gobbi and Aleks on the path. Am I getting confident? I get to QE park, thinking I still haven't seen a Nick behind, or a Nick in front, and that at least I kept my position. Finally, I get through the woods to the last downhill surge, startle a group of runners doing what looked like a rather gentle run, pose for the Stubbie cameras as I sprint downhill, and look out for Steve to take the baton. And my biggest achievement was probably braking before I ran into someone in a green shirt – or the wooden post they were standing in front of! On to Steve . . .

Leg 4:
Despite leg 4 being one of the shortest, at under 4 miles, the sting is Butser Hill, and I was told no one manages to run it, that's probably why I chose it! But would I have regrets?
At the changeover point in Queen Elizabeth Country Park, I took the baton from Dominic who, with leg 1 & 2, had put us into 3rd place. After a short uphill section through the woods, it led out to the base of what looked like Everest. Looking up, I could see the 2nd team about halfway - So near and yet so far, and the strains of Kate Bush and "Running Up That Hill" entered my thoughts.
Butser is sort of a 5-stage hill, starting gradually then getting steeper, with the last 2 sections out of sight, till you reach the top of stage 3. My aim was not to get caught, so the odd glimpse behind going up gave me some reassurance, but there was no letting up. (Prompts - Billy Ocean "When the going gets tough") It was well worth the quick stop at the top to take in the great views, including all the way over to the Isle of Wight (Last one - "The hills are alive with the Sound of Music") and to get some air back into the lungs and partially recharge the legs that felt like concrete! Onwards - the final section of the leg was under 2 miles of undulating track with some well needed tree cover, again with stunning views across the Downs; but it was all about trying to finish asap for the handover. In the last 100 meters, you could see and hear the other teams and supporters at the finish, so it gave the adrenaline a spur to find the extra bit to try and put in one final sprint effort.
After finishing, it seemed like no time passed before the chasing team was also at handover.
I had not caught the team in 2nd place but hoped that I had done enough for Abi to have a chance on her leg.
What a great day. I have never done a team relay like this before and what a route to use - The South Downs Way. The logistics of putting it together, along with the Club & Team spirits, was something to admire. The weather was, if anything, too good; but it meant the social aspect of the finish at the pub was even more appreciated.

Leg 5: I ran Leg 5 for the Runner Has Beens. It was my first event with SGR, and I didn't really know what to expect. Firstly, thanks everyone for being so welcoming! Have done 2 recces, so I knew the leg fairly well. I didn't aim for a pace, just went with what felt like a sustainable push. I saw off with our team in 3rd place. Before the 1st mile was up, I passed one competitor, going into 2nd place. I then just kept looking for the runner in 1st place but could not find them!! Until finally... as Winchester Hill came into view... there he appeared at the base, starting the ascent. I never thought in a month of Sundays that I'd catch him, but somehow, I found the energy to run 95% of that beautiful rancid hill, and at the very top, managed to sneak into 1st place.
It was sooo hot by this point, but it was a stunning leg to run. Having a shorter leg was fun too, as it allowed me to really push myself at my 1st SGR event. I learned I LOVE relays, and I love the SGRs. In fact, the pub after was lush, as I could chat to everyone and get to know the crew. What an ace bunch! I recently enjoyed tucking into my bottle of prize wine too... thank you!!

Leg 6:
This year was my 4th club South Downs Way relay. Coincidentally also my 4th go at leg 6. Despite only going wrong in 2023, I am still tarred with the brush of "getting lost" on this leg. Harrumph!
Anyway, what a fantastic day for Stubbies. Team spirit was in abundance, and the sun was shining (thankfully not too warmly for the earlier legs). Abi was our leg 5 runner and - and this is no exaggeration - the shock on people's faces as she ran up Winchester hill at the end of her leg was a sight to behold. Unfortunately, this also didn't give me much time to mentally (or physically) prepare for the final leg. I quickly downed my now obligatory caffeine shot and gratefully received the baton from Abi. She had performed something of a miracle, moving our team from 3rd to 1st place. It was clear - each and every one of my team had performed out of their skin to hand me a hefty lead - and I would not be able to bear the shame if I were to give it up.
The pressure was truly on, and my goodness did I feel it. My tactic was to head out quickly - in the hope I would be able to stay out of sight from the chasing pack. My scrambled logic told me this would mean they would NOT be quite as motivated to catch me. I think the pressure and nerves of holding onto the lead certainly contributed to my now racing heartbeat!
Thankfully, despite being beyond hot, I managed to maintain a reasonable pace and keep the other leg 6 runners at bay. Climbing Beacon Hill, I was looking back every few seconds to just check if anyone was there. To my relief, I couldn't make anyone out in the distance, so the pressure eased enough to allow me to walk pretty much the entire hill!
My teammates had provided magnificent support at all the key points - crossing the main road at Exton, the top of Beacon Hill and thoughtfully opening gates for me to save valuable seconds. My namesake, Steve Hull, even offered me some water at Exton, which I foolishly said, "no thanks". How I regretted that!
By the time I was on the home stretch, with a kilometre to go, I was still anxiously looking over my shoulder just to check if anyone was closing in on me. Thankfully, not a soul to be seen, and I could not have felt more proud of my amazing team as I crossed the finish and we were crowned winners.
I really can't wait for next year - maybe I'll get to do an easy leg for once?

TEAM 7 – Sobbington Green Runners – Captain Kirstie

Leg 1 – Kirstie

We had a great WhatsApp group chat leading up to the big day. We all had our legs sorted and had been out to practice them. There was a boot full of drinks, snacks and of course, the first aid kit! I packed enough stuff Bear Grylls would have been proud of! Anyway, I was dropped off by my teammates Alison & Neil. The nerves were there as the other Leg 1 runners were strong. I had my finger on the Garmin start and then off we went. The first half a mile was all uphill, so it was a speedy walk not wanting to burn out too fast. The next 4 miles were a bit of a blur as I focused on staying as close to the others as I could. I could feel my annoyance growing as the last downhill mile or so just never seemed to come. And when it did, it was flying feet time. It was a mixture of trying to get my little legs to move as fast as possible but also the fear of slipping on the gravel and having a tumble. Jacqui was steps ahead of me; I couldn't overtake her, but I also wasn't losing her. We both went flying through the gate one after the other. And finally, we could see everyone at the bottom. Then a farmer was coming up the hill, and I managed to skim past without falling into the hedge. I could see Alison with a gleaming smile and off she dashed into the dust. Me, I could hardly breathe. Neil saw the state of me and kindly offered to drive my car to the next leg. I was relieved my leg was over and could focus on cheering in the rest of the team as their nerves set in. It was a great day out, and thank you to my team for choosing me to be Captain! Ps Alison, your muffins were ace. PPS Neil & I totally didn't lose Jen numerous times when you were running your leg!

Leg 2 – Alison

Nerves were running high before the start of Leg 2 as I don't think a single person had managed to say anything positive about it. The leg wasted no time in living up to its reputation, beginning with a long, grinding climb with Chris Cullum on my shoulder, albeit for a very brief amount of time as he glided past me. Despite all the warnings, I actually found myself enjoying most of the leg (I'm not doing it again by the way). The route was challenging but beautiful. Until Harting Hill - it was in a league of its own and simply nasty. I had to dig deep, keep putting one foot in front of the other and hope not to cry. Thankfully, it came to an end as i handed over to Debbie!

Leg 3 – Debs M

The Plan

My strategy for this leg was simple: keep the runner ahead of me in sight and don't burn out too quickly. It was hot and sunny when I set off, but I could see my target up ahead. My main goal was just to keep him within a visual distance and run my own race.

The Run

The route was really undulating. It quickly became clear that he was stronger running up the hills, but I had the advantage on the downhills and the flats. I tried not to panic when he pulled away on the climbs and stayed relaxed. I just focused on closing the gap whenever the trail flattened out, knowing the last mile was more or less all downhill.

By the fourth mile, I could see he was starting to tire. We actually ended up walking up the last hill together. I kept my head, stayed calm, and waited for my moment. As soon as we got towards the top of the hill, I pushed on to overtake him and to keep ahead.

The Finish

I was incredibly glad to see the rest of the team cheering me on at the finish line. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience, though I was definitely sad that I couldn't join everyone at the pub afterwards!

Leg 4 – Neil J

Great atmosphere at Leg 1 as we wished Kirstie well and departed for the start of Leg 2. Kirstie came flying down the hill, and Alison took over and was out of sight in seconds. Off to Leg 3, which should have been me. I did my knees no favours 'reccying' this leg and nearly pulled out. Debbie kindly offered to do this leg, and I then got leg 4. Alison finished strongly, and Debbie left to do leg 3. Reality hit, and I was next. I was busy chatting at QE when Debbie raced down the hill. I took off like a 20-year-old, and within 30 seconds I had aged 60 years as I was puffing like Thomas the Tank engine. I got to the bottom of Butser Hill and saw Frances a short way in front. I caught Frances up and decided to stop and walk with her. We had a great chat (you always do with Frances) and made our way nearly to the top. As it levelled, I suggested we ran again, and this is where it went wrong. Within seconds I was picking myself up off the gravel after face-planting in front of a couple of cyclists. Along with Frances, they offered me water, and after about a minute we continued. I don't remember too much about the remainder of the run after that other than hearing Frances a short distance behind, reminding me to pick my feet up. It was a relief to hand over to Rachael for Leg 5. Watching Rachael (good runner) finish strongly on Leg 5 was great, and then watching Stu do brilliantly on Leg 6 was a joy. The day finished off brilliantly at the pub. It was a great team, led by Kirstie and I also got one of Alison's Muffins.

Leg 5 -Rachel H

'The nerves were definitely kicking in. Suddenly someone shouted, "Runner!" and around the corner came Neil, who, from what I remembered, had fought hard to gain us a place. The pressure was on—I couldn't let all his effort go to waste.

The baton changed hands and I set off, feeling as though I was flying down the road. That feeling didn't last long as I hit the South Downs Way, where a relentless gradual climb seemed to stretch on forever. Just when I thought it couldn't get any tougher, the trail plunged into a steep, rocky descent. Every step demanded concentration as loose stones slipped beneath my feet, and staying upright became just as important as staying fast.

Things were going well until I risked a glance over my shoulder. There was Rachael, steadily closing the gap. Time for emergency fuel! I started shovelling jelly babies into my mouth, hoping for a much-needed burst of energy—especially with Old Winchester Hill looming ever closer.

As Rachael kept the pressure on, I spotted Jack further ahead. That glimpse gave me renewed determination. This was my chance to protect the place Neil had worked so hard to gain.

The closer I got to Old Winchester Hill, the hotter it seemed to become. Unfortunately, the jelly babies didn't quite deliver the miracle I'd hoped for. On the final climb before the foot of the hill, a wave of nausea hit me. I had no choice but to walk, and Rachael swept past.

But I wasn't prepared to let her disappear. She unknowingly became my target, dragging me up the brutal climb. When she ran, I ran. When she eased, I eased. It became a battle not just against the hill, but against myself.

At the summit, the cheers from Tracey and the team were exactly what I needed. Their encouragement helped me push through what felt like pure agony. Cresting the hill brought instant relief, and suddenly my legs came back to life. I felt like I was flying once more.

Then, finally, I spotted Stu waiting for the handover. Seeing him was a huge relief'.

Leg 6 – Stuart B

My leg 6 of the stubby relay was the longest of all them, left of just over 7 miles, with a nice big hill. Once up Beacon Hill you then know that you're on your way home to the finish. I caught up with another team club runner by the farm, who was struggling with the heat, so I gave him some of my electrolyte drink, and we ran together to the finish, which he just managed to beat me across the line. As a team, we all did extremely well, and I was grateful to be part of a great team.

News From the Editor

July was the month that the emails landed in your in-box – Sadly not this year; better luck next time or the jubilant Congratulations You're In!!!

It just made me think of when I got the latter email; that email when it landed in my inbox that made my heart skip a beat. I'd been lucky enough to get a place in the London Marathon!

My first reaction was pure excitement. "I've got a place!" I think I may even have done a little happy dance.

Then, just as quickly, reality tapped me on the shoulder……"Hang on… I've actually got to run the thing now!"

Suddenly, 26.2 miles didn't seem like a nice round number—it seemed like a very long way. The excitement was quickly joined by thoughts of early alarm clocks, endless pairs of running shoes, gels with questionable flavours and trying to remember why anyone would choose to run for three, four or even five hours or more on purpose!

There was a brief moment when I wondered if they might have made a mistake and accidentally sent the email to the wrong person. Sadly, they hadn't.

Looking back now, those feelings make me smile. Every marathon journey starts with that wonderful mix of excitement, anticipation and just a tiny bit of panic. It's the moment you realise that the dream has become a commitment, and there's no hiding from the training plan.

What I didn't know then was how much the months ahead would give me. There were glorious runs where everything clicked, and others where my legs seemed to question every life choice I'd ever made. There were wet runs, windy runs, long runs and runs fuelled by the promise of coffee and cake at the finish.

Every mile, whether it felt fantastic or frightening, brought me one step closer to the start line on The Mall. Looking back, I wouldn't have changed a thing.

Sometimes the biggest adventures begin with two simple thoughts: "I've got a place!" followed almost immediately by, "I'd better dust off my trainers… this marathon isn't going to run itself!"

Captains' Report

. Captains Report:

July was a very busy month with loads going on and also was a very hot month for most of our runs, but we kept ourselves hydrated and chilled our pace and kept the miles ticking over.

We started the month with the Miles of Miles. We had 3 teams out on the night and what a great evening it was. Well done to everyone – there were some very impressive times.

Sunday 5th was the last HRRL race of the season at the Lordshill 10k. It was certainly a very warm morning run. The teams on the day where:

Mens A team: Jim, Alistair, Toby and Kieran,

Mens B team: Steve, Stuart, Oliver and Stephen.

Mens C team: Martin, Ian, Nigel and John

Ladies A team: Liz, Rachel, Sara and Kirstie

Ladies B team: Sue, Jules, Gilly and Kath

Well done also to Stacey and Mel.

Well done to Toby Smith, Stacey Read, Gilly Shutler, Kieran Chaplin and Melissa Barham who have completed all 12 races this season.

Wednesday 8th July was the RR10 at Itchen Country Park, well done to:

Mens A Team 6th position, Will, Iain, Richard, David and Alex.

Mens B team 18th position, Tony, Harry, Chris S and Graham.

Mens C team 33rd position, Haydn, Phil T, Russell and Nigel and well done to Andy, Kyle, Toby and Phil.

Ladies A Team 4th position, Becky, Alison G and Ronnie.

Ladies B Team 15th position, Anna, Tracy and Alison L.

Ladies C Team 20th position, Claire, Francis and Jessica and well done to Helen and Jules.

Saturday 11th July was the Lakeland Trails in Ambleside; we had once again a group of Stubbies lake to the lake district. Yes, we are there for the running, but we certainly had fun the day before (Friday) when we hired some Kayaks and took to Lake Windemere for a kayak tour. On the day of the races, we had 3 runners take on the 55k, Sara who completed the challenge and Marcus and Mark who completed the race. It was certainly a hot day and the sun and mountains just kept on giving.

We had a great bunch running the 23k and 14k. Well done to everyone that took part. Highly recommend this weekend away.

Saturday 18th July was our Parkrun takeover at Lee on Solent, well done and thank you to everyone who volunteered to help.

Sunday 19th was also the Portsmouth Joggers X Country, well done to Julie Ashman.

Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th was the Big Feat weekend, well done to everyone that took part in the 50k Ultra, Marathon and 16-mile runs. Big shout to Janet Shaw who completed her first Ultra. Well done, Janet.

Sunday 19th was our club relay, after months of training and recces on the south downs, it was finally relay day. We had 7 teams on the day, and it was great to see everyone out cheering each other on. You can also read reports from all the teams further down.

The results from the relay were:

1st Place – Runner Has Beans: Sara, Dan, Dom, Steve, Abi and Steve.

2nd Place – Fast, Faster and Fabulous: Jacqs, Jon W, Adam, Derrick, Rachael and Toby.

3rd Place – No Interest in running for Leadership: Matt, Mike, Lyndsay, Jon L, Carl and Ed

4th Place – Sobbington Green Runners: Kirstie, Alison, Debbie, Neil, Rachel and Stuart.

5th Place – Green Legs and Hamstrings: Wendy, Chris, Nick C, Francis, Glynne and Tom.

6th Place – Chaffing the Dream: Pete, Jack, Nick K, Evan and Andy.

7th Place – Green and Bear it: Giota, Alistair, Phil, Katie, Sarah and Kieran,

Wednesday 22nd was the next RR10 at the university playing fields. Well done to:

Mens A Team 8th position, Richard, Dan, Craig, Chris C and Tony.

Mens B Team 22nd position, Phil, Graham, Haydn, Chris S and Gary.

Mens C Team 34th position, Adam, Steve, Tim, Russell and Carl and well done to Phil and Nigel.

Ladies A Team 4th position, Becky, Lucy and Alison.

Ladies V Team 17th position, Ronnie, Francis and Debbie.

Ladies C Team 24th position, Tracie, Helen and Sara and well done to Chris.

Forthcoming Club Events and Social

RR10 League
Final race of the season
Wednesday August 19th – IBM Hursley – starting at 7.00pm

HRRL SEASON 2026/2027

August 30th – Totton 10K The Totton Running Club 10K Road Race is based in Copythorne, Hampshire. - Totton Running Club 10k

September 6th – Overton 5 this is a favourite, so get in quick -5 miles of undulating countryside.!! Overton-5-2026

October 25th – New Forest 10 mile is a mixed terrain event, entries have been open since April SO GET IN NOW New Forest 10

November 15th – Gosport Half Marathon
Gosport-half-marathon
Organised by our neighbours, Gosport Road Runners, if you don't want to run, you can always volunteer as a marshall!

December 13th – Victory 5 mile – new route this year celebrating its 80th year!
The 80th Victory 5 Mile 2026

THESE ARE THE HRRL EVENT OPS FOR ENTRIES

If that's not enough below are the none League events
Hampshire

September 13th – New Forest Marathon – Sunday 13th Sep – Marathon, Half, 10K, 5K plus junior races and even a woodland walk – New Forest Marathon event

October 4th – Southampton Half and 10K, from St Mary's football ground and organised by Run Through
Southampton Half

October 18th – Great South Run 10 miles, the annual local event!
Great South

WEST SUSSEX
October 11th – Running GP Goodwood Motor Circuit – Many distances to choose from, all distances running on the iconic Goodwood Motor Circuit where the annual Revival takes place – Distances are 50K, Marathon, 20 Mile, Half, 10K and 5K – Running GP Goodwood October 2026

TRAIL EVENTS

Big Feat Events have some interesting trail events with many different distances. Next events are
August 23rd –Big Pilgrimage – a local event, Southampton to Titchfield Marathon and 15 Miles
Big Feat - Big Pilgrimage

Remember to wear your SGR shirt at HRRL events; this ensures points are earned for the club and as an individual.

Useful Links

Order online or instore with Alexandra Sports, stockists of SGR sportswear:

SGR Club Kit

SGR Session and Training Calendar

Sessions and Training Calendar