The Blister

The Magazine for the Sydney Striders Running Club | Established 1980
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UTA & Canberra Times Marathon moments

Run Beyond Project

A Marathon Dream for the Ages

Remembering in CoVID times

Juniors' corner

Remembering Jackie Ramsay

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VOLUNTEERS ARE WHAT KEEPS THE CLUB RUNNING!

Cover image supplied by Joe Degabriele, June 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Striders,

Who would have thought that we would be in the situation that we are right now? Life is ever changing and we are doing our best to "roll with the punches". That's not always easy given the changes to our lives, job situation and inability to see our family and friends. Please remember you also have your Strider family, willing to chat with you, set you challenges, make you laugh, create virtual training programs, and even run trivia nights! Notably, the first Strider trivia night was held last Friday night (13th August). Fun was had by those who attended and a special shout out to Monica, our social events manager who certainly made us think, even delving into trivia questions surrounding our Striders history. We want to do more social nights like this to keep us all engaged with each other but in a different way. The winner will receive a little prize this week.

There are a number of great articles in this issue but one that is close to our hearts is that regarding Jackie Ramsay. Jackie made everyone feel so welcome with her infectious smile, zest for life and love for her family and close friends. Jackie lost her battle last month and will be greatly missed. Jackie left behind her wonderful husband Andrew and her beautiful daughter Alice. Rest in peace Jackie.
#GoStriders

Jo Cowan - President

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MTG Report

By Lesley Mason | Canberra 2021

Finding the words to describe the 2021 Canberra Marathon MTG experience is challenging and full of emotion. We trained through the 2020 cycle and then the world was turned upside down and events cancelled... then we trained with hope that we might get to run in September and a few legends completed the distance, but still the opportunity to run a marathon event eluded us. Finally, after around 18 months and 3 training cycles, the MTG legends got their day.... and Canberra put on a lovely cool day.

The Canberra course has its ups and downs (pun intended), and there are sections that can challenge us deeply. However the best thing about the Canberra Marathon course is the multiple out and back sections. These are the sections that personally bring me so much joy because I get to see and cheer on my fellow runners. This meant that we saw our MTG crew running their race and as a run leader it was an absolute joy to see all the training coming together and seeing them smash out their race day. It was an absolute privilege to witness.

Congrats to the Canberra MTG Crew! I am so proud of this group who supported one another week in week out.

The core group that trained with us and completed the marathon were Simon, Kay, Monika, Ian & Warren. Mostly first marathons too! Cathy took it a step further and decided that 50k was the go for her first road ultra!

Congrats are also in order for the legends who trained with us and chose to run the half. It was great to see you out there! There were quite a few of you so please forgive me not listing everyone. There is also a massive THANK YOU in order for Gilbert, Brenda, and James - amongst many others who helped back me up throughout the training.

Plus, I would like to offer a huge THANK YOU to the whole Striders community. The support you have extended to the MTG group throughout the whole training cycle has been so wonderful and to see that manifest with such an amazing race day experience was truly a blessing.

Bring on Blackmores!

Top: Lesley excited at CTM Festival
Above: MTG looking forward to their race on Sunday

Sydney Striders well-represented at the Canberra Marathon Festival

Top: Striders at the start line of the Canberra Half Marathon.
Middle: Post race half marathon and full marathon finishers
Bottom: Striders celebrations in Canberra -basking in success and surviving the freezing conditions!

When in doubt - just marathon!

By Simon Maxwell | Sunday 11th April

How it started..

Rewind to November 2017; I was about to turn 50. I was overweight and downcast; unhappy at work; unfit; previously a pack-a-day smoker; a picture of Not Good Health.

My partner Kay had encouraged me to begin the parkrun journey, and by 2020 things were looking up – with Kay, I had become a regular parkrunner, then had done a few 10 k's, and by 2020 we were regularly running half marathons.

But never did I think a full marathon was within reach.

A marathon had always been an ambition of mine; but how to begin? It always seemed a bridge too far - Kay & I would finish a half marathon and say to one another "Well I'm glad that's done, but I could not do the whole thing all over again...."

Then CoVID-19 hit. What else is there to do but run? We joined Sydney Striders in June 2020 and tagged along to our first MTG (Marathon Training Group) run on 14 June 2020. My Strava title for that morning's 20km run is "So we went and joined a running club...."

By then 'the bug' had well and truly been caught. And it wasn't CoVid. I found myself researching races, discussing training tips, hydration, race nutrition....

Striders a-go for the race day ahead!

Training with the MTG crew

Training with the Marathon Training Group was tough, but with the always smiling coach Lesley (Mason) at the helm, I would say, not too difficult. Lesley's training plan was well thought out, she had us gradually increasing our long run mileage, only by 10% or so each week, nothing too onerous.

Blackmores Sydney in September 2020 became a virtual race, but we weren't in the mood for a virtual. Like many runners, I'm Scrooge McDuck, so couldn't see the point in paying money for "just a run". But then, over the weekend of 19/20 September 2020, I watched my Strava feed in envy, as other MTG'er's results began filtering in. Little bit jealous that weekend I must say, seeing mates who we'd run in get their first marathon distance run under their belts.

Then Canberra Marathon caught our eye. With lumps in our throats, Kay and I signed up.

The Marathon

Sunday was an early start – race time was 6.25am, which meant a 5.00am wakeup. There was a slight downpour and some nerves but the excitement was building.

Into the start chute, a final hug and kiss with Kay; a "good luck and see you on the other side", and then we were off and racing! Before I knew it, we were off to a rolling start on Ngunnawal land.

I took Lesley's advice not to think too hard about the marathon and not to dig deep or dwell mentally on anything at the early stages, so in the early miles I was able to relax and take in the sights as we ran up and around Parliament House, taking time to notice who was around me. All along the way there were plenty of Striders and supporters, yelling encouragement. It was all smiles and happy days at this stage.

Kay and I had trained for this. We knew our target pace was 6.20min per kilometre, that would give us a total time of 4hr 27mins – 3 minutes to spare for a sub- 4hr 30 min marathon. Our first 20 kms went like clockwork – we had no splits slower than 6.24 and none faster than 6.01. Things were looking good. Side by side we ran.

Well – when do things ever go to plan? I was feeling really good until kilometre 21. But as we started the trip back from Yarralumla I just started to slow. Kay and I had agreed in the weeks previously to stick together until at least the 35km mark, and after that it was everyone for themselves….well, that time had come, but sooner than expected. I just couldn't stick to the pace. I started slowing, Kay drew ahead.

Kay, Simon and Lesley at CTM Festival

I knew, right there, that my hopes for a sub 4.30 that day were kind of dashed. From then on, it was a bit of a grind. Heading out of Yarralumla, I tried to regroup. I tried to think of some mantras I had rehearsed. I reached halfway. I had been looking forward to what seemed a nice, picturesque cruise along the base of Black Mountain and the lake as I headed along Parkes Way.

The wind really picked up here and we ran into a freezing headwind the whole way out. The run along this road is bleak and boring; the field had really thinned out here, and with no spectators about, it felt quite lonely.

By this stage there were a few people being helped by St John's ambulance volunteers on the roadside. I was scared that would be me soon! My shuffle had turned into a walk. I had lost my confidence in my race plan at this point and was terrified I'd end up walking the rest of the way. It took everything I had mentally to keep running out to the turnaround point.

On the way back I saw a familiar face – there was Cathy Rowney, fellow MTG'er, on her way out – she was doing the 50km ultra, WHAT A LEGEND. She looked in great shape. We exchanged a high five from over the centre line. From then, I went back into my shuffle run, urging myself on.

Hey Strider - less walking, more striding

After studying the course, I knew there was a leg that would either make me or break me. It comes after King's Avenue – right when you are SO CLOSE to the finish line but you then have to veer off in the other direction for a final 5km loop. I was alternating between walking and running at this point, feeling pretty dejected. But with about 8km to go, I happened to look across the road, and in the distance I could see Kay, running strong, moving her way through a group of what looked to be the walking dead. She was moving at a constant pace, looking good. I smiled to myself, knowing that she was on track to achieve a good time.

Occasional calls of "Go Strider" from the sidelines were enough to keep me going. And then someone came up behind me and I heard the words "Hey Strider - less walking, more striding!" Well that's a kick in the butt right there!

I reached Telopea Park, and finally I got to say to myself the words I'd been longing to say for a while... "ONLY A PARKRUN TO GO!!!"

It was still a run/walk battle but the end was in sight. And then at the 38km mark, coach Lesley appeared alongside me, urging and encouraging me. Try as I might, I couldn't hang on with her, but her kind words were enough to get me up the last little rise - straight to the finish line.

Kay and Simon at CTM Festival

I summoned everything I had, picked up the pace, running fast to the finish. I entered the chute, with a horde of Sydney Striders screaming and ringing cowbells. I ran across the line, arms outstretched, grateful to have had the opportunity to achieve this feat. A volunteer handed me a shiny marathon medal – I had done it!

Kay and I both absolutely loved the race. Being able to run again with thousands of others is an amazing feeling, especially when you've got friends racing with you.

I'm pretty sure I ran most of the race with a big smile on my face, and to top things off, seeing Kay and a bunch of other Striders standing on the finish line cheering me in was the icing on the cake.

If you ever feel like a good cry, go stand at the finish line of a marathon! My aim was 4.30, so my eventual time was a little (teeny tiny) bit slower than I'd hoped for, but I wouldn't change a thing and I don't care.

I was so happy after the race - I learned so much about myself and others on this journey, and I had to go through every single second, and every single part of it to get to the end.

Kay's run was amazing – and without a GPS watch too! She paced herself like clockwork and finished in an official time of 4:29:30! A sub-4.30 marathon on debut – go you good thing!

My official results was a time of 4:58:04 – I score that a 6/10, can do better! But what a day! I loved every high and every low.

This is why I started running. To learn to be OK with not feeling OK. To hold on and keep going. Because in the end, I made it. I am a MARATHONER.

Thank you to everyone who supported me, ran with me, sent, wrote or said a kind word, waited for me, stood in the cold for me, screamed for me. You brought me home over that finish line!

Thank you to my incredible Striders community for all the encouraging words, and the company on the long runs. Thank you to Lesley for the support and coaching advice and thank you to my wonderful partner Kay for being there with me, through all of it!

Finally, the finish line!

ULTRA TRAIL AUSTRALIA 2021

Ting, Gilbert and James crossing the UTA Finish Line!
Photo credit to official UTA Sportograf Photography

MORE THAN STEPS AWAY

By Larraine Becker

"What is the UTA 22?" I asked a friend November last year when she mentioned she had a ticket to sell. I was still living in Brisbane, and only just ran my first half marathon in 2020. "You'll be in Sydney Larraine, so close and easy to get to!" "Why not?" This was before the course got changed, and they added a few thousand stairs! My biggest concern was the 951 Furber Steps at the end, but little did I know these measly Furber Steps, of which we ended up only doing about 260, would be the least of my worries!

Leading up to the race I got more and more nervous, reading about the course from locals who posted photos and descriptions of what we were all in for. This is the first time I heard about the landslide! I wonder if I ran the course beforehand would I have been less nervous? Probably not. Sometimes it is better not to know what is coming!

The first 6 or so km was quite nice, cold but it was good to get started and get rid of the pre-race jitters. We headed out to Narrowneck before we started our descend into the valley via the Golden Stairs. Here we ended up in a bottleneck due to congestion on a very narrow and technical single track. This took about 20 minutes or so to get moving again. A bit annoying, but after stacking it on a trail run earlier this year, I was not planning to race down anyways! The landslide was up next, and luckily there was a good steady pace here and no hold up. I can happily say the landslide was not that bad, long legs definitely helped!

At this point I was happy that I wore shorts and arm sleeves I could push down and up again! It helped to be down in the valley where the wind was not as bad as the first few kms. After conquering the landslide, it was again mostly technical single track with lots of tree roots, rocks and mud. You really needed to have your wits about you the whole time. Challenging to say the least! I knew at this point that the worst climb of my life was getting closer.

Right: Larraine competing in UTA22
Photo credit to official UTA Sportograf Photography

There were so many stairs on this whole course that it felt like that's all I was doing, climbing up and down stairs, but nothing could prepare me for Fernbower! It. Was. Terrible!! I ran the whole race with a friend, and I think we both needed encouragement at this stage. Thinking back to it, at least it was interesting. We were entertained with different types of stairs – some wooden, some rocky and some steep ladder type ones. Thank goodness for the handrails! I got through by counting to 10, and then started again, and I kept this going until I reached the top. No idea how many sets of ten, but more than what I would have liked! Reaching the top was such a good feeling, and it was nice to be cheered on at this point.

We passed the only aid station (around 16km) after which we ran through Echo point and could hear the finish line! So close but yet so far. To my utter disappointed, we headed back down some stairs again. Well I guess this make sense since we weren't done with stairs just yet! I knew it was not going to be a sprint to the end. I just needed to get the last bit of Furber stairs done. Reaching the top and hearing someone say "No more stairs" was probably the best news I had all day! Not long to go now, but all I could manage was a shuffle. Hearing the cheering and cowbells at the end got me moving a bit faster and before I knew it we were in the finish chute and crossed the line! First UTA22 done and I survived. Looking back at the photos, it could not have been that bad since I was smiling in each and every one of them! And did I mention the views? Pretty amazing if you remember to look up!

UTA50 next year anyone?

Left and Below: Larraine midrace in UTA22
Photo credit to official UTA Sportograf Photography

UTA 50

Many steps for GIANT Steps

Above: Gilbert, Adam, Tanya and James all ready tfor the UTA

By James Liew

"It's hard to believe, but just over three months ago on the 15th of May, I was fortunate enough to enter the Ultra-Trail Australia 50km run. I already had a few marathons under my belt and wanted the challenge of a trail run. My interest in marathons was initially as a focus for fundraising for Giant Steps, and after 10 years of road running I needed something different to excite my friends, family, and colleagues to consider a donation. Well, I certainly got all that I hoped for in spades by signing up to a tough event.

As some of you may know, my son has a diagnosis of Autism. Unfortunately, within the spectrum of Autism, my son's challenges are in the more severe end and despite the best efforts of my wife and myself, he continues to require significant support, at home, and especially at school. In 2013, after several years on the wait list, we were blessed with our son being enrolled into Giant Steps Sydney, a school located in Gladesville. The school provides educational support for children on the Autism spectrum, and alleviates parents of children with special needs to a large degree. Behavioural difficulties are the most likely concerns for all schools and teachers, but Giant Steps have never given up on supporting our son in class. So accommodating is the school, they have never asked parents to deal on our own at home what they could not deal with in the classroom. I am sure there are limits, but thankfully, we have not yet seen these. In light of the current lockdown situation in Sydney, we are so grateful that Giant Steps are still attempting to provide an in-classroom environment for our son as he is incapable of attending on-line learning. For the teachers, allied health professionals, and support staff, this is certainly going above and beyond. It is for these reasons I remain passionate around fundraising for Giant Steps.

50kms, 2400m elevation gained, and over 11 hours of amazing scenery

Initially I had planned to enter the 2020 UTA50, having paid for the entry in November 2019, months before we had heard of this obscure viral infection called CoVid-19. Well, you know how that turned out. Just like all of you, I felt the disappointments of race cancellations, and the loss of Strider training sessions due to social distancing rules.

When we finally managed to run the event one year later in 2021, there was certainly an air of gratitude within the general feeling of anticipation, excitement and yes, some anxiety. But what a day it turned out to be! It was certainly cold in the morning, but probably very much to be expected for the Blue Mountains, and the way the run was organised from start to end was to be commended. There were plenty of noisy volunteers to make up for the loss of crowds due to social distancing rules.

I ran with Gilbert and Ting most of the way (Ting started in the group after us but managed to catch up), and we ended up running in the dark near the end with Gilbert's 'boombox' blaring out a mix of Justin Bieber, 80's rock anthems and Bruce Springsteen (that's another story for another day!) 50kms, 2400m elevation gained, and over 11 hours of amazing scenery. I cannot express enough how grateful I am to all the people that helped me with the training runs and got me through the race itself. I of course blame Tanya, Adam and Sonya for coming up with the idea in the first place to run the UTA50. In all I am so happy that we all kept that commitment, along with Gilbert, Lorna, Pete, Claire(s), Alex, Tim and Ching Ching.

Below: James completing the UTA50
Photo credit to official UTA Sportograf Photography

The journey for a parent with a special needs child can often be lonely but along the way I found a special group of Striders that certainly made it easier. And did this event excite my friends, family and colleagues enough to consider a donation? Absolutely, yes! To my delight the total amount raised was just under $29K. Training and running the UTA50 was an amazing personal experience, but the fact that this amount of money was raised for Giant Steps was equally heart-warming. One thing to mention, Giant Steps does not charge fees for children to attend. It has always relied on, and continues to rely on, the ongoing generosity of parents and friends, including friends in the business community to supplement the Government educational funds. CoVid-19 has meant that all of our usual main fundraising events were cancelled for 2020. 2021 looked so promising and I was so happy that the UTA50 was able to go ahead.

But as I write this, fundraising events for the rest of 2021 looks quite gloomy. The work at Giant Steps needs to continue to support families and kids, so I would very much like to ask for your ongoing support. If you are able to donate to Giant Steps, or would like to know more about Giant Steps, please visit this site: https://giantsteps.net.au/

Thank you.

Left: James and Gilbert completing UTA50
Photo credit to official UTA Sportograf Photography

HOW TO ROCK THE UTA50!

By Sonia Lopes

Once upon a time... so long ago we can't even remember (thanks CoVid) ... Gilbert's Gazelles decided it would be a good idea to sign up for the UTA50. So we did!

Below: And so the training begins

And on 15 May this year, we conquered UTA 50.

Who are we? Officially, Gilbert's Gazelles - \'gil-bərt /gəˈzɛl/: a motley crew of graceful, swift, fleet-footed and unquestionably elite antelopes Striders. Aka Lorna Ash, Tanya Kolokotsas, James Liew, Adam Milbank, Peter Moffitt, Alex Varol and myself. Held together by Gilbert's indefatigable spirit.

Like all infamous moments, I remember exactly where it started. Running down Ashfield on the way back to Yeo Park on a Sunday STaR run. With Brenda Gaddi and James Liew in tow, talk had turned to the UTA 50. James will tell you that it was I that incited him, but he's wrong. It was definitely the other way round.

Of course, I had no idea what I had signed up for. But it sounded like fun. Even worse, I was confident. This thing was almost a year away – how bad could it be?

September came and we signed up. We were in! Confidence was high. Happiness was high. I had a niggling feeling I had just done something really stupid, but it was only fleeting and I ignored it.

I interrogated anyone and everyone who had ever heard of UTA50. Most were super encouraging – "You do know it ends with 900 steps don't you?", "Don't worry about the steps, it's the height you have to worry about – you're not scared of heights are you?", "It's not the height you have to worry about – you do know everyone cramps up the Furber, don't you?

Then there were the non-runners. “50kms – Why?”

I myself would ask that question a few times over the coming months. CoVID hit. UTA was cancelled not once, but twice.

But fast-forward a year and there was no longer anywhere to hide. I was doing this and I had to train up. We were all in the same boat – family and work demands were always going to be there, but so was the climb out of Kedumba. Sadly, it’s not an exaggeration to say our first training run in the Mountains was a disaster. We started off enthusiastically...look at those smiles!

Above, Right and Left: Training with friends always helps

But the hard truth was that we were road runners with all-too-little trail experience, lacking strength and too trigger-happy with our cameras. We ran over five hours to get through a little over 20kms. We were tired and the Furber Steps were still two hours away.

Waiting for our Uber...

As James said afterwards, some days you beat the mountain and some days the mountain beats you. That day, Uber bailed us out (not an easy feat in the Mountains, mind you).

But our spirits were undaunted. With our eyes open to the enormity of our task, we ramped it up. Trails, hills, strength-work, stairs, more stairs, more hills. We hit local trail routes like the Striders Roseville Ripsorter.....

Above: Striders at Roseville Ripsnorter

Below: Completing various road races as part of UTA50 training

... we did road marathons...
... we went back to the Mountains, time and time again, waking up at unsaintly hours in the morning.

Above: Training in the Blue Mountains

And we went to sports shop after sports shop, slowly ticking off all our mandatory gear, hoping some other UTA50 entrant hadn't taken the last space blanket from one more shop.

We learnt to use poles... anything to get us out of Kedumba that little bit quicker. There was literally a piece of gear for every challenge the trail put to us.

But the training took its toll. One of us got a stress fracture and had to pull out. One of us needed unexpected surgery. And unbeknownst to me, I broke three ribs in our last training run in the Mountains. I found out three days before the big day. But with medical clearance and a stern warning that I was not under any circumstances to fall during the race (no pressure hey?), there was no way I was not going to be at that start line.

So after months of hills, mountains, hydration vests, stocks, Tailwind, salt chews, bleary mornings and sore calves, the big day arrived. I cannot remember a more nervous night or morning.

But we started.

We climbed, we ran, we hiked...

We loved every moment....

... every epic moment.

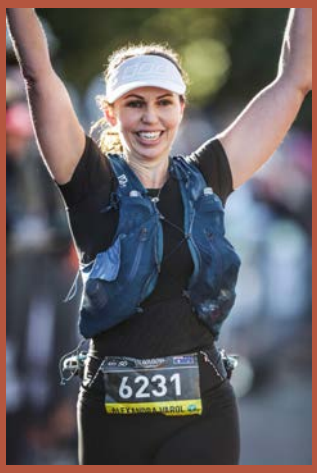
And we did it. Every single one of us.

So in the end, I know why.

There's nothing more empowering than looking an impossible goal in the face and wearing it down. There's nothing more awe-inspiring than glaring up at a mountain, but yet taking that first step. And once you have looked the Furber Steps in the eye at 49kms and beat them, step by step, there's nothing much that can touch you. Brenda, you were right that day in Ashfield.

But above it all, there's nothing more wonderful than sharing it all with friends who will see the best and worst of you, and walk through the valley with you.

Did we question our life choices? More times than I can count.
Are we doing it again next year? Hell, yeah!



Above: Peter, Gilbert, James, Ting, Sonia, Adam, Alex and others at the finish line
Photo credit to official UTA Sportograf Photography

Above: Happy students who participate in the Run Beyond Project!

Run Beyond

By Dave Criniti | June Update

2021 has started off strong for Run Beyond, and growth is set to continue throughout the remainder of the year!

March's Teacher Training Day, supported by our wonderful friends at Maximus International, welcomed teachers from numerous new schools to the fold, with representatives from Penola Catholic College, Emu Plains, The Ponds School, Lakeview High School, Gorokan High School, and, coming from further afield, Orara High School and Coonamble High School, all keen to implement for the first time.

Rich discussion was had with experienced teachers from numerous other schools who are keen to continue their Run Beyond journey.

Run Beyond involves students working towards a goal race, completing a theoretical curriculum as they do, which focuses on the development of personal and social capabilities which empower them, beyond the finish line, and beyond the context of running.

Run Beyond Project - teacher training

Our first Goal Race was at the Central Coast's popular Bay to Bay event, which couldn't stop our students, despite the wild weather. The students facing this challenge were also embracing another. Killarney Heights High School caters for a more affluent demographic than that which Run Beyond targets, and as such, these students would not normally meet the requirements of our Student Selection Policy. However, teacher Heather Hozack, who has previously implemented Run Beyond with great success at Narrabeen Sports High School, knew the girls at KHHS would benefit, and suggested they come on board as a Supporter School.

The girls jumped at the chance to participate in the program (at their own expense), and also use the opportunity to raise much-needed funds to ensure we are able to implement in our usual catchment of schools. The KHHS crew raised over $4700, which provides shoes and apparel for our regular participants, as well as covering Goal Race entry fees and associated transport and accommodation costs.

The girls all performed exceptionally well, and were suitably proud of their performances, with some even starting to plan further challenges only moments after crossing the finish line. A couple even floated the ambitious goal of completing a half-marathon.

Other fantastic initiative which needs mention in this update is the 2nd annual "Geordie Airways" Airport Express. This 25km run from Rhodes to the Sydney Domestic Terminal is an annual fundraising event, coordinated by Novocastrian (of the English variety) Owen Conlin. 25 participants took on the 25km challenge, with lots of banter along the way, and raised over $1200 for Run Beyond in the process. Owen is a wonderful supporter of the project and his enthusiasm, humour and good-will is greatly appreciated!

Currently we've got students from a range of backgrounds working towards their Goal Races and we would love to see Striders at these events to support these students and celebrate their achievements. We all know the power of a "Go Strider" at races. Seeing one of our students at a race and giving a simple "Go Run Beyond" could make a world of difference to that student.

Our students come from a world less privileged than many of us enjoy. Run Beyond provides a supportive environment in which they can experience a sense of belonging, an avenue through which they can achieve, and a portal into the running community. Join us at our upcoming Goal Races to help welcome these young people.

Our Coonamble High Schools students are currently working towards the Dubbo Stampede 10km on 29 August. On 12 September, our students from St Ives will be competing at the Run Forrest Run event in St Ives, under the guidance of Striders Amanda Shannon and Nicole Frykberg. On 12 September, our third cohort of Nambucca Heads High School Students will be completing the 10km event at the Coffs Harbour Running Festival, with our Orara High School students on volunteer duties. The Orara crowd will be running their Goal Race at the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival on 19 September, where they'll be joined by our crews from Westfield Sports High, Northlakes High, Gorokan High, The Ponds High School and Riverstone High School. Penola Catholic College and Vincentia High School.

Gulgong High School and Lightning Ridge High School will be at the Panorama Punish on 24 October. Chester Hill High School and Plumpton High School will be completing the Bare Creek Trail Run on 7 November and Airds High School will round out the year at the Sydney Marathon Clinic on 14 November.

We look forward to Striders encouraging our wonderful young participants at these events. Additionally, we hope to have some students from various schools at a Striders 10k before the end of the year, restrictions permitting – be sure to give them a cheer!

Below: Bay to Bay Event

NOSH

By Jessica Luquin

The 46th Great NOSH footrace took place on the 6th June, and like all other races, was postponed in 2020. We were so lucky to have run this course with other enthusiastic runners keen to get as many races under their belt this year as possible. Many Striders participated in the event, where two courses 16km and 22km were offered along the scenic trails from Lindfield to Seaforth.

If you've never done this race before, and you're looking for a great training race or course, following on from or in the lead up to UTA or 6 foot track, this track promises elevation, technical and fire trail, wildlife, stunning views and more. Located just a short 25 minutes from Sydney CBD, these glorious trails are not far from home.

Images on this page are credit to the official race photography of the Great Nosh Footrace 2021
Below and Left: Many familiar Strider Faces enjoying themselves on the trails!

Beyond the Ultimate Ice Adventure

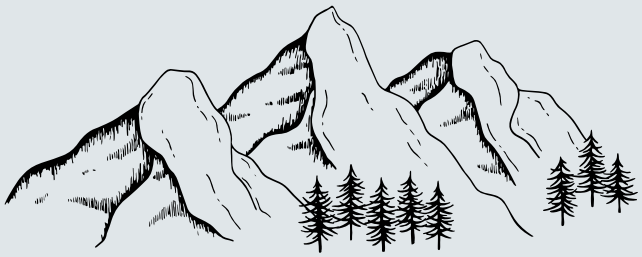
By Sharon Callister

On Monday 24 February 2020 I checked in for one of the most difficult and exciting running challenges of my life- Beyond the Ultimate Ice Adventure. It was just over a year before this event that my cousin, Tony suggested we do it together, "Of course!" I said, why not? Having completed it some ten months ago, I am now able to reflect on just how epic the entire event was.

The race was held over five stages in Northern Sweden, commencing at the mountain centre of Stora Sjöfallet's and finishing in the Artic Circle town of Jokkmokk some 230 Km's later. The region is a UNESCO world heritage area commonly referred to as Swedish Lapland.

Right from the moment we arrived for race briefing, compulsory gear and food check, I felt well out of my comfort zone knowing the significant challenge and pressure of what lay ahead. Within hours of our arrival we had checked in our luggage and were declared completely self sufficient until the end of the event. The first night's accommodation was in a teepee on the snow (ok we had a small deer hide to lie on). Temperature was about minus 20 Celsius- a bit of a shock to the system for sure, especially since the average night time temperature I had experienced during the Australian summer in Brisbane was 25 Celsius.

I felt well out of my comfort zone knowing the significant challenge and pressure of what lay ahead



Day 1

This stage was a 54km section to an area known as Aktse. The first 12 km was an easy road section that gave us all a false sense of security, surely this race can't be too difficult after all? This was followed by a frozen lake crossing and then some significant climbs which were seemingly endless - snow shoes were mandatory for the rest of the day given the depth of the snow. The most killer section of this stage was after the final checkpoint with a sharp steep climb and then a long and at times steep descent. I was completely surprised at how long it took me to complete day one, almost eleven hours, with the final hour in darkness. Accommodation was in remote cabins that the local Sami people (who are part of the race support crew) had to dig a path through the snow so we could access them. The last time they were occupied was the previous summer.

It's difficult to convey how shattered I found myself at the end of this day but take my word I felt completely broken. Usually on multi-day events organizers build the intensity each day with the tougher sections later on in the race, not so here.

After my 'active' eleven hours on the snow, the next requirement for the day was unpacking my gear, trying to get things dried (log fire requiring constant attention) and then cooking dinner. Dehydrated spaghetti bolognaise and getting to bed as soon as possible. There was not much conversation that night between me and my nine male roommates, I think everyone was in a work of hurt, or maybe it was just me?

Below: Campsite set up - Image credit to the Official Beyond the Ultimate Event Photography

Day 2

I woke up in a poor frame of mind, the enormity of what still lay ahead was dawning on me, my gear was still wet as the fire had gone out overnight and I was behind everyone else getting ready, so much so that I missed the official start of the day by a few minutes.
As I made my way to checkpoint one (CP1) I decided this was all too much for me and I was going to pull out of the race. I just was not up to how hard this challenge was mentally and physically. My head space was all about quitting, I was also cold, and my feet were hurting being in snowshoes again. I rationalized in my mind all the excuses I had and all the reasons I would give to friends and family consequently. I also knew that most people who DNF in this race do so in day one and day two, so I was not going to be the only quitter. In the end there were six out of the 36 competitors who did not complete the race.

Once I got to CP1 for some bizarre reason I decided to keep going for a while longer, no one was more surprised about this than I was. However soon after I realized that while I thought day one was too hard, day two presented even more difficulties and challenges. The total distance was 44km and in my mind I thought I would complete this stage in about nine hours given it was significantly shorter, I was soooo wrong about that, welcome to Mt Kabla.

The climb started about two km's after CP1 and took us through beautiful pine forests as well as open spaces. By CP2 I was already working very hard but was now also determined to try and keep going. The most difficult stage of this day (and the entire race) now lay ahead of us, 8km to CP3, I did not know this fact at the time thank goodness.

It was one of those climbs where every time you think you have reached the top you turn a corner and there is way more to do. The ascent was 700 metres over about six kilometres which may not sound much but in freezing conditions, minus 28 with plenty of wind, very deep snow in long sections. I don't mind admitting I had a complete melt down, where was CP3? Had they moved it? Would I die out here?

Out of nowhere a snowmobile passed by (race support crew). I flagged them down, crying of course, and asked how far I was still away from CP3. It was still about 4 kilometres away they said. Well that was it! I really was going to ditch this race as soon as I got there! They advised me they had been watching me and I was apparently moving well and to keep going, then they were off and gone. I had to suck up every ounce of strength I had and keep going. CP3 finally arrived some 3.5 hours after CP2 and I had plenty of support and help there to refuel, get warm rehydrate and..... yes continue. The course was downhill from there until the next CP so that at least made me feel better.

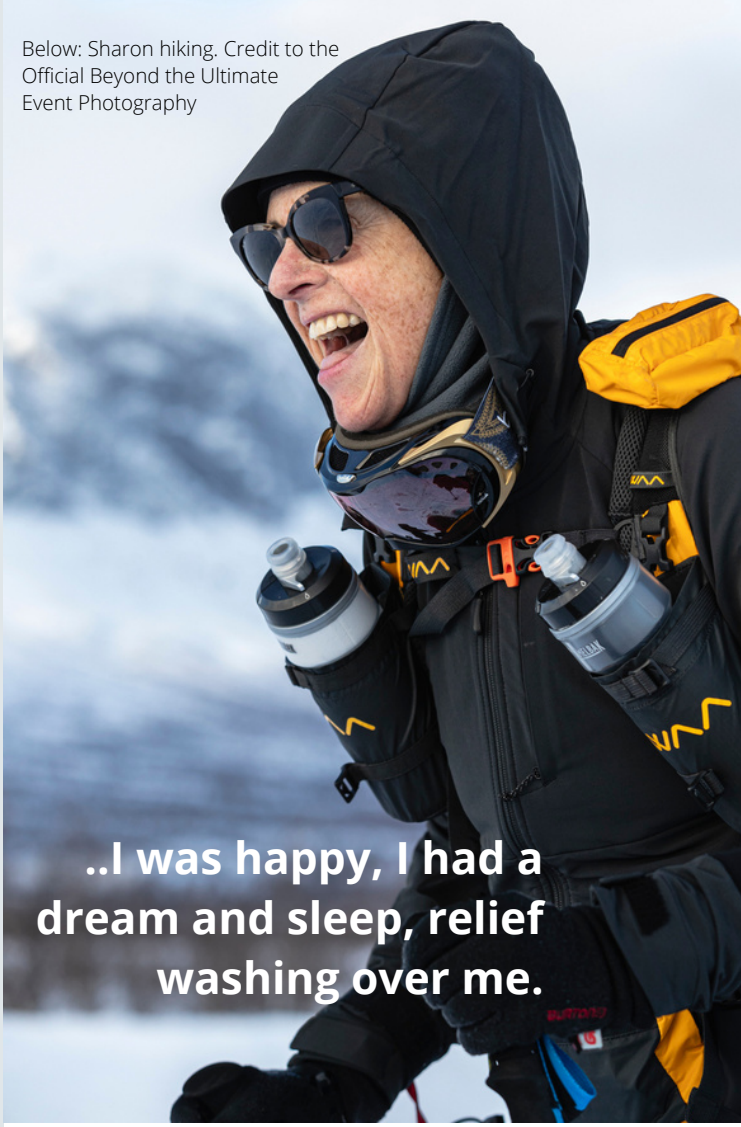
The day finally improved for me. I started to appreciate the beauty of where I was and the reasons, I had chosen to do this crazy event. I was also able to complete the last 10km with snowshoes off, what a relief that was. After about 12 hours out I was finally at my destination Arrenjarka. Same drill as last night, unpack bags, dry shoes and other wet gear, eat and to bed as soon as possible. The place we stayed in had electricity (woo hoo for that) and looked like it would be a beautiful summer resort too. While I was thrilled, amazed and almost in disbelief I had finished the day, I was disappointed that in my first two days I had not taken one single photo and I determined to have a much better approach from day three.

Background Image - Sharon hiking. Credit to the Official Beyond the Ultimate Event Photography

Day 3

We awoke to the coldest morning of the race so far – 26 Celsius at the start which was at 7.30am. I was surprised to still be in the race on day three but pleased I had made it through the allegedly, toughest days. While the start was cold the day was beautiful and sunny. I finally got to ditch the goggles for sunglasses and remove the six layers on my head down to two, oh joy!

The day was all about beautiful pine forests and an afternoon of traversing frozen lakes. What a change from the previous days! Mostly flat and such spectacular scenery and majestic views - total isolation in a beautiful wilderness, now this is what I came for. I finished before sunset at the beautiful island of Laxholmen which was just spectacular. My first finish before dark and plenty of time for food and repacking gear and another early night.



Below: Sharon hiking. Credit to the Official Beyond the Ultimate Event Photography

Day 4

Very early start this morning. We were up at 5am for a 6.30am start in the dark with headlights on. My approach for today was to focus checkpoint to checkpoint rather than focus on the full distance which was too mentally challenging for me.

In the early stages of the day checkpoints were generally two hours apart, around 10km in distance. This was very manageable and in glorious sunshine, enjoyable. Most of the day I was completely alone on the track. I literally ran across eight reindeer on the track, they were beautiful, but I was a little daunted, are they aggressive or timid and will they attack me? They ran off when I got close, phew!

As night fell I was getting pretty weary but I still had about three hours before my finish. Headlight back on I continued. Whilst beautiful, it was also scary especially going through pine forests with lots of shadows. My imagination was running wild. The final few kilometres were on another frozen lake but one where water seeping up from under the ice is common, depending where you tread. To say I was petrified I would be immersed in the freezing water is an understatement! Thankfully I arrived at the destination, officially now in the Arctic Circle, dry and immensely relieved I had made the long day, it took me almost 15 hours!

Sleeping arrangements were for about 40 people in a large yurt. I was allocated a thin plastic mattress on the floor in a corner, sounds very uncomfortable but I was happy, I had a dream and sleep, relief washing over me. At this stage I was completely over my dehydrated meals, so I opted for just mashed potatoes (made from Deb) and hot chocolate. I was so happy.

Day 5

We awoke to a beautiful view under light snowfall. In a matter of hours this crazy adventure would soon be over. I was a little emotional but determined to enjoy the last morning, and it was magnificent. I was relaxed and totally immersed in the pristine location, my last opportunity to enjoy the wilderness.

Before I knew it, I had arrived back in civilisation. The town of Jokkmokk where all competitors were greeted by the race director and congratulated on a champion effort. With beer in hand we were directed to the last teepee of the race, only this time it was filled with tables and chairs and the best meal I have ever had, fish soup and traditional freshly baked bread. Oh my goodness it was absolutely delicious. In fact, I admit I went back for several helpings, I had expended so much energy in the past five days I needed calories and I needed them now.

Below: Sharon hiking. Credit to the Official Beyond the Ultimate Event Photography

Final Thoughts

The last night we spent in log cabins in what looked like a beautiful summer resort, we were warm and cozy. The best part? We also had a shower. So after six days of same clothes and no showers we felt like we had arrived in heaven. Unfortunately, there were no towels and the shampoo and conditioner were frozen, but this did not deter us and we found ways to cope with these minor issues easily.

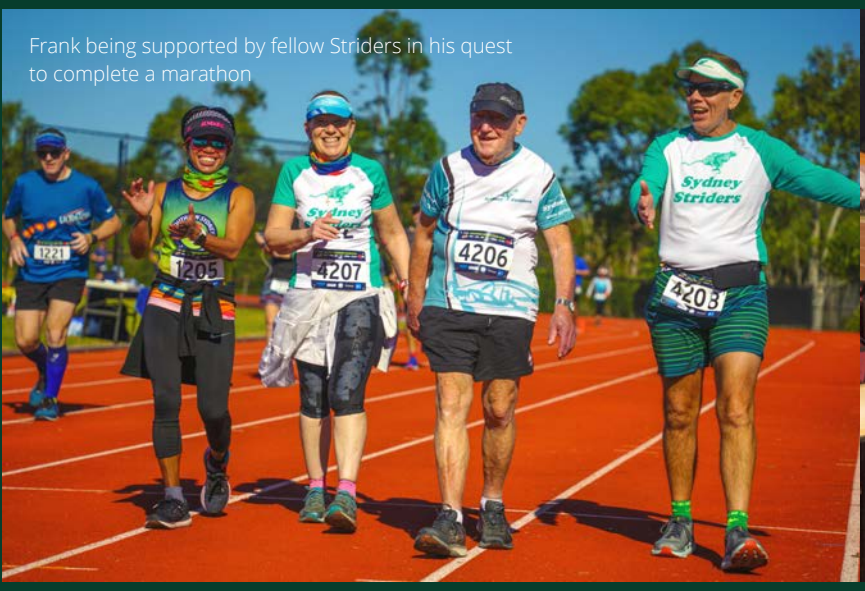
Medals were presented at a special dinner that evening and we departed early the next morning for our post-race destinations. For me, that was London overnight then back home to Australia.

One of the hardest events I have ever done for sure, but the wilderness and the beauty were unsurpassed. I consider myself very blessed to have been able to experience this amazing opportunity. BTU are an excellent organisation and despite my belief on day two that I may die (purely self-indulgent) they take every precaution with personal safety, including issuing everyone with satellite trackers.

On a final note, sadly my cousin got injured six weeks before the event started and had to withdraw. I think his absence as my partner affected me significantly, especially in the early stages of the race. He plans to do the event in the near future, COVID permitting!

A Marathon Dream for the Ages

By Glenn Lockwood and Belinda Louey



Frank being supported by fellow Striders in his quest to complete a marathon

Top: Frank and support team with their medals
Bottom: Support and smiles from the team

Frank approached me a few months back registering his interest in embarking on a mammoth personal goal – to be the oldest Australian man to complete a marathon.

There was no denying Frank's long-held ambition and enthusiasm. A sprightly 88 year-old who had already conquered the marathon distance at 85 years old, what would it take to help him achieve this? He had this cemented as a dream back then to be the oldest man to complete a marathon and his time had arrived. Having helped his training and supported his memorable effort before we set to task to help him once again. Accompanying Frank were Belinda Lockwood and Kathy Johnsun – dynamic individuals and great companions to have on any endurance journey.

The marathon event in mind was to be the Southern Sydney Ultra Marathon on 3-5 June at Barden Ridge. A number of distances and events were running concurrently on this day comprising of 3,6 12, 24hr, marathon and 100km distances. It was a nice flat track which would involve something like 120 odd laps over 8+hrs. A small contingent of recognisable Striders were also there competing in respective events. With that, we are also thankful to run director, Stephen Redfern and his amazing team for putting on such a fabulous event and catering to our needs.

We made sure we had a steady plan to accomplish Frank's goal and most importantly – a support crew. Having helped his previous marathon goal we had in mind to keep Frank on his feet through a steady pace of brisk walking throughout. Grateful that many supporters and family came to cheer us on.

We had a fabulous day but the sudden and quick drop in temperature when the sun went down slowly brought an end to Frank's event and he unfortunately had to withdraw with just under 7kms to go. We are so proud of Frank and wish he could have found the energy required to finish the marathon but it wasn't to be. Our team was amazing for keeping the dream alive for as long as we did. It was such a privilege to share the day with him and his amazing family. Whilst it was not the day for the record, Frank remains an inspiration.

Left: Go Frank!
Right: After the race. So close yet so far

One Ultra Birthday Party

What a way to spend your birthday!
By Damon Lynch

"I'm going to run for 12 hours around a 400 metre track on my birthday!" - said nobody ever!

Damon and friend, Gerard accomplish the Ultra

Well that's exactly what I accidently signed up for earlier this year. With a limited number of events in the past year and having not entered UTA, I thought it was a good opportunity to try something different and perhaps even tick the box for my longest run.

So how do to train for a track event? I had no idea.

I took an approach that wasn't vastly different to standard training blocks. I incorporated regular sessions at Gore Hill Oval to get my mind around doing laps, speed sessions and parkruns, throw in some STaRs and individual long runs, including a 34km reconnaissance of the track a few weeks earlier and a few double up run days to get used to that tired legs feeling.

My mileage is not overly high compared to some endurance athletes but I try to maintain consistency. This was somewhat broken up after I had a tough 6 foot run in March, where I twisted my ankle and had a significant fall as well as dealing with ongoing hips and groin issues.

That said, a comfortable 70km was increased to 80-90kms in the last month of training and I was willing, if not ready, to run for 12 hours on the 5th June.

Fortunately, I had a wonderful crew man in Gerard Riordan to support me. Well actually he felt he owed me something after I crewed his Coast2Kosci last year. Logistics aren't difficult on a track but the amount of food intake, pace strategy, conditions are important and it was great to have him on my side for this one.

So, onto the event itself. I arrived before 7am on the day and set up my crew area, funnily enough next to fellow Striders Kathy Johnsun, Belinda and Glenn Lockwood and the evergreen Frank Dearn, who was incredibly (!), attempting a marathon at his age. The event was to start at 8am and was a rather casual affair, with a short briefing and then we were off.

My plan and the actual execution of the race were quite different. I intended to go out around 5:15 pace however high 4mins felt more natural and before I knew it I was in the game. After a few gut issues in the first few hours and coming through around 3:32 for the marathon distance, it began to get tough. Whilst the track is synthetic rubber, it is actually quite tough on the legs and my lower body was feeling it.

The loops were not so much a mental challenge as we were always looping around with other runners and the group was very friendly as I always find with runners.

Frank and his crew were pacing along outside my lane and we gave each other a cheer each time we passed each other; even a happy birthday cheer was heard; and the addition of the 24 hour, 100km and 6 hour runners was a welcome distraction. As we reached 5 hours, things got a bit tough and the temperature appeared to rise somewhat. I still had 7 hours to go, which was mentally tough but Gerard was a great crewman and ensured I was getting the right mix of food a fluid.

A few additional friends and supporters arrived and thank goodness for that. They really kept me focussed on moving. The tactic from this point was to mix running blocks of 20-30mins with some pit stops for food and a couple of laps of walking and this seemed to work. My pace had slowed somewhat but I was holding onto 3rd place and the body was starting to feel more comfortable with the distance.

I cannot explain the unique phenomenon about runners but we seem to have a way to work through pain and find a way to continue

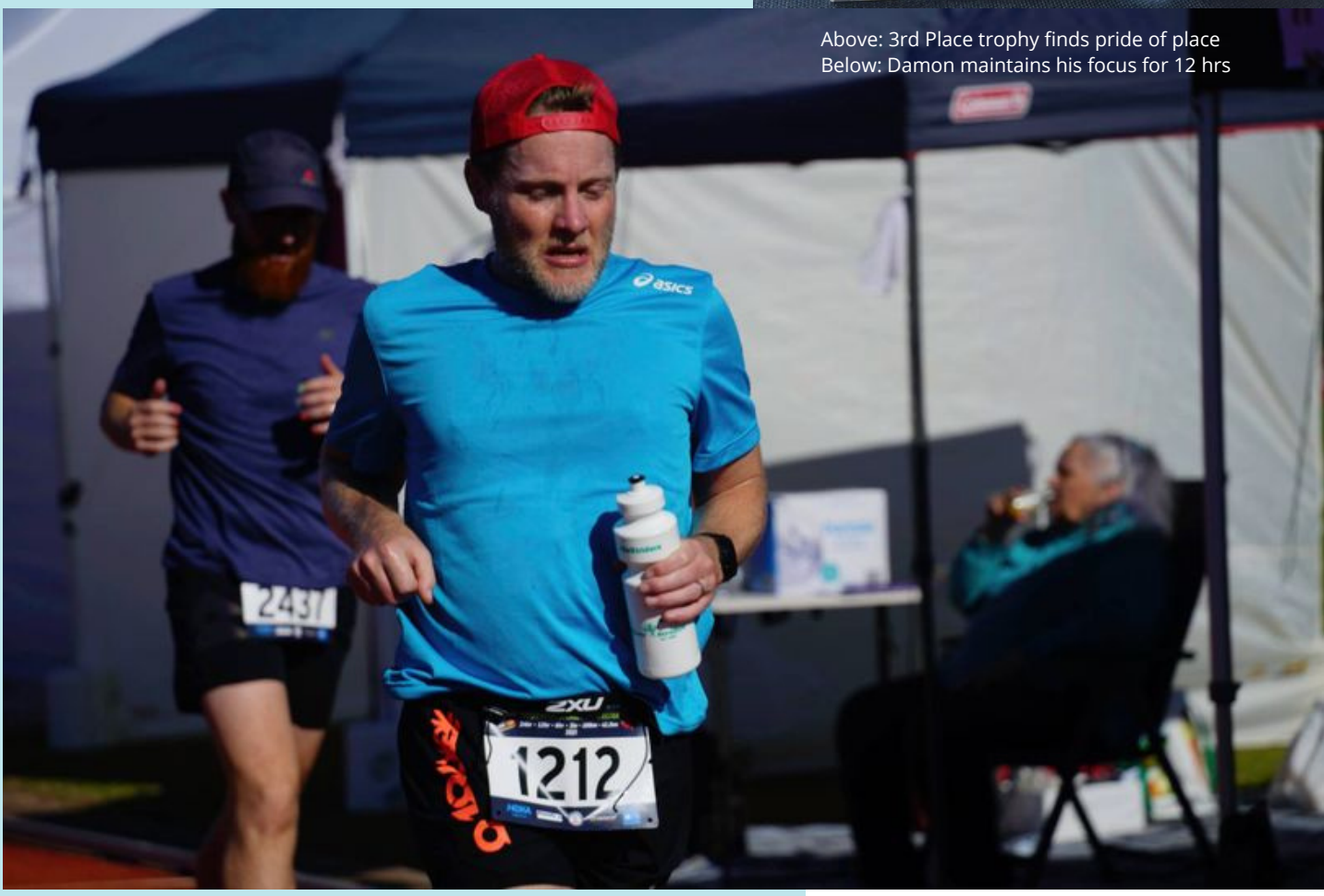
Damon on track for 3rd place

I cannot explain the unique phenomenon about runners but we seem to have a way to work through pain and find a way to continue. The dusk was met with an absolutely beautiful sunset over the Barden Ridge track and the coolness made it very comfortable for running. I had suddenly hit the 100km mark around the 10 hour mark as the 6 hour runners finished up their run. Finally after a cup of 2-minute noodles and a short break to recollect my thoughts I prepeared myself for the “downhill” stretch. By the time we reached 11 hours, I was told I was still in 3rd place but only 2k in front of 4th. Being the very uncompetitive person I am, I demanded a Red Bull, asked the guys to point out 4th place and went about knocking off the last 50 minutes. 8kms later and a total of 116.3k was reached.

Some set a challenge to run their age in kms for their birthday – I well and truly exceeded that. A year older, my longest run ever and a podium finish to boot! I celebrated with a birthday beer after the race.

A massive thanks to Stephen Redfern, wife Penny and all the volunteers and supporters who made this event possible. The event was wonderfully organised and based on feedback from many others, I'm sure it is an event that will be firmly fixed on the running calendar in the future.

As I ponder on the event, I ask myself "Would I do it again?" The answer is - I don't know. But as Horrie put it to me after, if it was easy, everyone would do it. The body takes a battering on the track but the comradery of everyone was contagious and there is nothing like the atmosphere of racing. Maybe I might crew next time!



Above: 3rd Place trophy finds pride of place
Below: Damon maintains his focus for 12 hrs

Remembering in CoVID Times

By Dale Thompson

In these CoVID times, there is ample opportunity to reflect on the important things in life. We have been very fortunate that we have been allowed to exercise daily, which is a great sanity saver and also brings into stark focus the role that running has in our mental well being. I have been blessed to live in the same local government area, or within 10km of a number of Sydney Striders which has added interest, company and imagination to my training. We arrange to meet somewhere in the area in which our circles overlap and seek courses which remain within that restricted area. I didn't know before now that Hornsby Local Government area covered such a large expanse. I have ventured west of my home exploring deep into the Fiddletown tracks which had been used years ago by early settlers getting access to waterways.

This time has also allowed me to reflect on those things that attracted me to Sydney Striders and have kept me coming back for 35 years. My first encounter with a Strider event in 1986 was a STaR through Lane Cove, starting at Tryon Road from someone's house. Being new to Sydney, I had little idea where I was and after re-emerging from a toilet stop, I found myself alone somewhere near Lane Cove Golf course. I had to use the clubhouse phone for Bruce to come and take me home. Despite that less than promising start, I persisted and began to find runners of a

Top: Dale leading the pack!
Bottom: Dale and fellow Striders racing

similar standard and I also realised that there were maps of the STaRs handed out at the start of the run (not that I could follow them very well!) The STaRs began to build up in number and they incorporated people from all demographics. I remember running hard with old Bruce Murray and Ron Daley, and young George Lisson and Tina Campbell. Terry McIver had red hair then and at the end of each STaR we had refreshments at the home of the host.

The STaRs took on an important role in training as we were able to run hard in company for a full 30km, and although I had an afternoon soccer game on Sundays, I wouldn't miss a STaR for anything. This meant some complex babysitting arrangements. There were also events to which we took the whole family. One Striders relay run was conducted in the Yarramalong Valley along the dirt roads. We were assigned to set teams and had to run a set distance. There were about six teams and the competition was steep. We finished on a picnic ground and enjoyed a shared lunch with our families. I remember this fondly as a great event. We also had some feeble attempts at track racing. One time at the track opposite the Drummoyne Swimming Pool and another at Olympic Park. Needless to say there were a number of injuries from people whose heads remembered how good they were but whose bodies failed to rise to the challenge.

I ran all my best races in Sydney Striders uniform. Along with Linda Thompson, and Tina Campbell, I made up the winning team for the Sussans 10K Classic with an aggregate time of 121 min 23 secs. This event, conducted by Sydney Striders attracted 640 women in 1989.

In 1989 the club president Alf Field ran with me in Canberra to get me through my best marathon (3.11.38) and a number of my crazy friends have joined me in teams to complete 100k runs!

Left: Dale and fellow Striders at the 10k series
Right: Dale enjoying a glorious view

These days my body defeats me and I am not able to run as I would wish but I find great pleasure in seeing fantastic improvements in the athletes who submit themselves to the Saturday punishment at Lane Cove and come up with resultant improvements in performances. There is also great fun to be had in the company of Terry, Peter and Kevin on the long Sundays morning walks. There are some really lovely people who have breathed a new life into the club and it is wonderful to see their influence. For me, Gilbert has been a wonderful addition to the club and his promotion of the club through social media allows us all to remain in contact.

I hope that the newer members of our club will be able to look back fondly on the very positive influence Sydney Striders has had on their lives. I intend to keep shuffling so that I eventually wear out!

Below: Eyes ahead - Dale and fellow Striders powering on.

Juniors' Corner

By Tony Wong

Additional photography courtesy of Stuart White and ANSW.

45 Members

Handicaps

Ingrid Kingsmill won the Xmas 5k Handicap with a time of 19 minutes and 14 seconds which was 27 seconds improvement. The Mile Handicap was held in January due to the Northern Beaches lockdown. It was won by Amy Thake with a 30 second improvement to 5 minutes and 46 seconds.

The Easter Mile Handicap was won by Lilli Krawitz who improved by 9 seconds to 6 minutes and 13 seconds while the 5km Handicap was won by Sarah Hussey with a massive 4-minute improvement to 20 minutes and 23 seconds.

Endorphins were topped up with chocolate after the Easter Handicap Mile

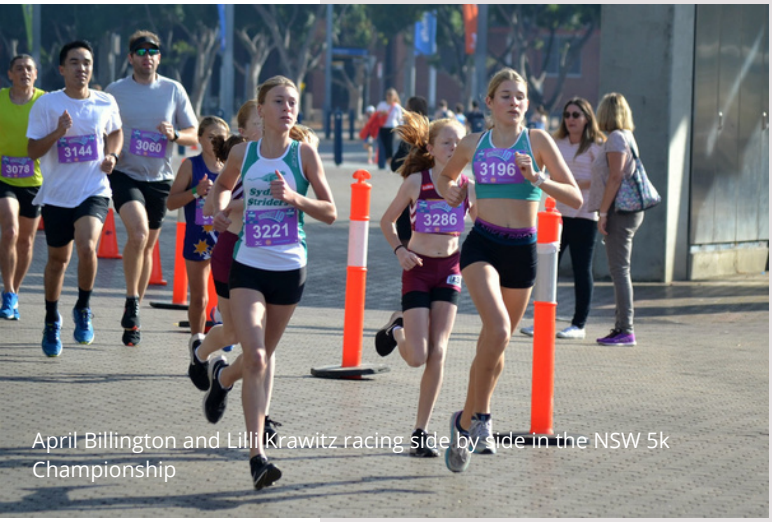
Above: The individual medallists from the NSW Junior Athletics Championship

ANSW Competition

At the NSW Junior Track and Field Championships, there were individual medals for Jemma Brandon Cooper in the F19 800m, Ingrid Kingsmill in the F17 3000m, Hannah Lovlin and Amy Thake in the F20 3k Steeplechase. They were joined in the NSW Team competing at the Australian Championship by Adelaide Williams who ran in the F15 3000m.

In the winter season, we went out to the State Road Race at Homebush, the Novice Championship at Ramsgate and the Cross-Country Relays at Ryde.

Winter Competition Photo Gallery


April Billington and Lilli Krawitz racing side by side in the NSW 5k Championship

Well done to the 5km teams

The start of the 5km at the Novice Championship at Ramsgate

Mercy Nathanael in the Novice 5km with Ingrid Kingsmill in pursuit

The Novice competitors, young and not so young

The under 14 girls' team at the NSW Cross Country Relays at Ryde

Jaime White handing over to Harrison Hunziker in the NSW Cross Country Relays

Right: All smiles at the end of a gruelling day at the NSW Cross Country Relays

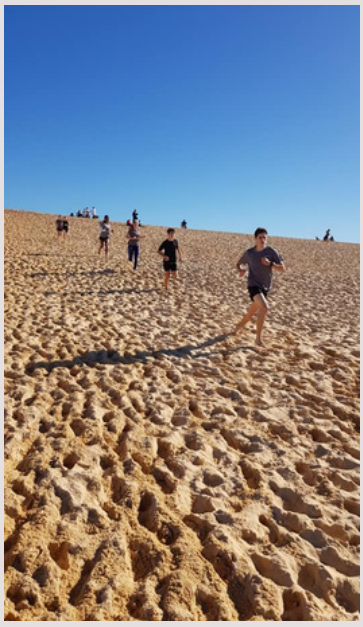
Other outings

Sarah Hussey was the first under 12 girl in the 10k Sun Run in February.
Mercy Nathanael was 3rd lady in the Lane Cove 10k in February and the Homebush 10k in March.

There was success for Hanni Weganaar and Will Collinson on the beach at Branch and State Surf Life Saving running events.

Training

We continued to find new places to train to keep running interesting.
If there are any juniors keen to start training with us please email:
juniors@sydneystriders.org.au



Top Left: We train on the beach
Top Right: We run up and down sand dunes
Bottom Left: We chase the rainbow
Bottom Right: We train at scenic spots

And finally, here are some of the grown ups running in the NSW Cross Country Relays

Top Left: Julie Hunziker
Top Right: Caroline Yarnell
Second Row Left: Belinda Louey
Second Row Right: Julie Kenny

Third Row Left: Jason McIntosh
Third Row Middle: Dani Andres
Third Row Right: Mens XC Relay
Bottom Left: Tony Wong
Bottom Middle: EJ Davie
Bottom Right: Womens XC Relay

STaRs - on the Run

STaRs are group runs held every Sunday morning (**S**unday **Tra**ining **R**un), on some 30 different courses covering the most scenic areas of Sydney's North Shore, Eastern Suburbs, and the Inner West. Each STaR has a course map indicating various distance options from 10K to 30K. Our run starts at 6AM (long course) and 7AM (short course). Come on, select a distance and join us! Below are some highlights of this year's (non-lockdown) training runs.

Below: We need more jumpshots on our STaRs, right?!

Rain, hail or shine - we always RUN!

Top: 7am group at Harbour View STaR
Middle: MTG crew are always early starters to morning runs
Bottom: 7am Crew at Rhodes Rumble STaR

Top: Hosted treats at Never Surrender STaR at North Ryde

Middle and Bottom: Camaraderie and conversations make training runs better

Top: All style - Joe and Silvia hosting the Tourist Trot STaR at Centennial Park in 2021 when we were lucky enough to have hosts return

Bottom: Andre, Peter, and Terry (Church Point Challenge, Narrabeen) were the first crew returning to STaR hosting since the CoVID-19 outbreak.

Around the Training Grounds

CPR | Tough Thursday | Dales Demons

Dales Demons
Saturday - 6am Riverside Drive Lane Cove National Park

Centennial Park Runners
Wednsday and Friday - 6:00am Paddington Gates

Tough Thursday
7pm Rotary Athletics Field, Lane Cove

Go Shane and Max!

Tough Thursday
7pm Rotary Athletics Field, Lane Cove

And sometimes we celebrate training anniversaries with cake! Thanks, Gilbert!

Jackie Ramsay

A life lived, loved & never lost

On 10 July we farewelled a fellow runner, an enthusiastic Strider and a dear friend to many. Thanks so much for the gift of friendship out on the road, on the trails and everything else in between.

We miss you already. #GoStrider

Below is a small snippet of Jackie by one of her dear friends, Brenda Gaddi.

To my dearest J,

I have spent the last two days going through our texts with each other. I was scrolling up and up and up and up hoping to arrive at the very first text you've sent me.

I didn't quite get there.

I miss you.
I hope your wild curly brown hair has grown back now.
I hope those pigtails are back on.
I hope you're sipping loads of English breakfast tea with just the right amount of milk.
I hope you've found the perfect swimming hole.
I hope you're lifting those weights again.
I hope you've found the perfect vintage dress store.
I hope you're catching up on those missed MAFS episodes.
I hope you're talking someone's ear off.
I hope you're giggling.
I hope you're laughing.
I hope you're running those trails again.
I hope you know how much you're loved and missed.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of Jackie, please support Lifehouse and the research team that was looking after her.
Click here to donate.

The Last Word

By Belinda Louey

Keeping it together

Despite another very sudden but not greatly unexpected turn of CoVID making a comeback, there is some bittersweet knowledge that as a running community we can still rally and in some ways, be together – though apart – train safely, yet also look out for one another. As runners we are a very agile and creative group when we want to keep up with our running ways!

Thus far, we were fortunate to have had a bit of a reprieve with a few STaRs returning, hosted and DIY, enjoyed our weekly coaching sessions, group runs along with new protocols to adopt and lots of club support in coordinating events and groups. The work and thought behind the scenes are not lost in keeping our club members motivated.

If you were in the throes of established BGT (border group training) you may have discovered a radius of new running buddies to run, race and train together. We could be forgiven for not being able to don our green and white uniforms during lockdown but even as a renegade runner running about our club spirit strides on! As well we shall see those well-executed training will come to fruition even if the rest of the year may end up with some virtual races, training and pacing coming back in. No run is ever wasted and well, our running life still goes on. I take comfort in the fact that we will be race-ready when those registered events return!

Though we may see things through lens of then and now, common to all is the good thing that at least we are still safe. Winter may feel dark and cold but whatever the woes and weight of the world, getting up to run it out is quite the tonic.

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