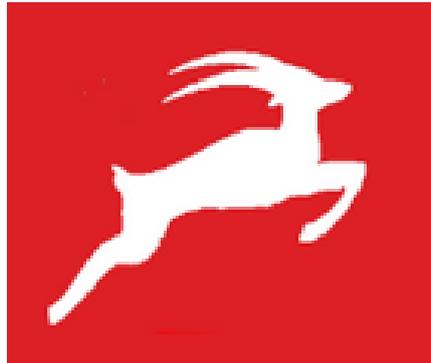


Your quarterly round-up of race news, interviews and everything that's happening at club



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Wymondham 20 miler: Gazelles on form



Julie London, Lisa Netto, Maria Hughes, Sam Barwick, Carol Cooper, Imogen Lees, Beth King, Mimi Waters, Carol Baker **PIC: MARIA HUGHES/FACEBOOK**

Cambridge half marathon – 05 March 2017

Imogen Lees

Race season is properly upon us – there's something on somewhere every Sunday and Gazelles can be found representing the club all over the country (and the world). So it's tremendous when 26 club members gather to compete in the same race.

The Saucony Cambridge Half Marathon is one of the region's biggest running events, attracting around 6,000 runners to a course that not only takes in Cambridge's picturesque history, but also brings racers out into the surrounding countryside.

Sunday morning began in beautiful sunshine, but as crowds of competitors gathered on Jesus Green, the gloomy predictions of the forecast began to come to pass. As Amelia Whiting remembers: "We got to the start area with plenty of time to spare and it was as if somebody had flicked a weather switch: the

clouds came over, the drizzle started and the wind felt Arctic." Although there were two waves at the start, the first few miles were pretty congested; however, as the course left the town centre it became easier to find room to run.

Michael Eccles was at the front of the first wave, and stayed there for the whole 13.1 miles to go on to take second place overall in 1h09m48s – a PB. Our first lady Gazelle home was Rowena Leary in 1h29m01s.

The relatively flat course produced a really strong set of performances from the Gazelles, despite strong winds in the final miles.

"Mile 12 was horrible," recalls Amelia Whiting. "Up over an overpass into a headwind and everything felt like lead, but I knew the finish line was coming... so I pushed hard and crossed the line just before the clock ticked over to 1h55m."

Amelia bagged herself an 11-minute PB of 1h51m55s – keeping it in the

family, Phil Whiting also achieved a PB (1h26m17s). Sam Thelwell's time of 1h28m30s and Maria Hughes's 1h53m59s were also personal records.

Nice work, Gazelles.



Michael Eccles on course for second place

PIC: BRENDA HUTCHEON/FACEBOOK

Mud, sweat and tears... everything you ever wanted to

The winter months are the time to dig out the trail shoes and take part in cross-country. Norfolk may not be known for its mountains, but it has plenty of beaches and open spaces, and can certainly produce the mud...

East Anglian Cross Country League

The East Anglian Cross Country League stages Wednesday-afternoon races across the region. The league has its origins in the military, and events used to take place on Army and RAF bases, but now races are held across Norfolk and Suffolk, from beach to lake, and teams from loads of local running clubs take part.

Organised by the always enthusiastic Jude Durrant, there are two series – winter and summer – and with individual and



A large field sets off in the forest

PIC: EACCL

team prizes up for grabs, the league is keenly fought.

Male and female Gazelles – including Pete Thompson, Anne Ellen, Steve Rolfe, Carol Betts, Dudley Garner, Beth King and Andrew Hammond – have turned out in a variety of weather conditions this winter, the women

generally running around 5km and the blokes 10km. From the beach at West Runton to Whitlingham Broad, venues have included forest, playing fields, river paths and trails.

If you can get out of work on a Wednesday, it's worth taking part.



Rowena Leary gets stuck in

PIC: AMELIA WHITING/FACEBOOK

Horsford XC series

Kate Head

Sunday 18 December was a chilly day. With ambient temperatures of around three degrees, most people were probably thinking about last-minute trips to Norwich for Christmas presents.

We were standing in a large wood near Horsford, thinking about the best way to avoid hypothermia and awaiting the start of the first of Norwich Road Runners' three-race cross-country series. For the uninitiated, the "course" is multiple laps of an undefined length (between 1.5 and 2 miles) and takes in winding woodland paths, a couple of short hills, fallen trees, roots and – most memorably – two distinct sections of bog.

The younger racers run one or two laps (age-dependent), with older juniors and ladies running three, and four for the men... so everyone has plenty of opportunity to wade waist-deep

know about winter cross-country (but were afraid to ask)

Reepham winter XC

Sam Barwick



Steve Corbould wades in **PIC: REEPHAM RUNNERS/FACEBOOK**

What better way to spend a crisp, clear January morning than waist-deep in filthy, stinky mud, dipping under wobbly, unstable bridges and laughing at your team mates as they fall head-first into the latest pile of gloop?

I have always loved cross-country – the muddier the better. Having completed my secondary schooling at Reepham High School, the fields and puddles around the village bring back happy memories... although 35 years later it does seem much more of a giggle and less about trying to lap the smokers in the hedge!

Trail-running and cross-country sum up why I love running. Not always concerned with time but testing yourself with fences, mud, hills, water, mud, rivers, mud, stiles, mud, cow shit and yet more mud. If you've never tried it I can wholeheartedly recommend you give it a go... just don't wear white socks!!



Sam Barwick, loving it **PIC: REEPHAM RUNNERS/FACEBOOK**

in the mire. Hinting of the conditions, the “bog” marshals dress in wellies, bin bags and Marigold gloves, although they are kind enough to offer everyone a helping hand.

Lap one sees everyone try to stay dryish and cleanish, employing a range of leaping and hurdling tactics. Lap two brings the realisation that, despite your best efforts, you have somehow ended up wet and filthy... so you might as well wade through the water, but try to keep your shorts dry. Lap three is the “beyond caring” lap, so you jump straight in.

At the end of race one I can honestly say I have never been so pleased to be so smelly and cold, and after a hot brew (hot drinks are provided at every race), happily headed off, dressed in bin bags, looking forward to the next race. One long shower and one hot bath later my shins revealed what looked like marks left by an angry kitten attack, but thankfully there were no more serious wounds.

Cue round two: 15 January. More of the same... but actually less of

the same, as logging meant that the course was slightly shorter – although it still included the obligatory logs and bogs.

By this time I had found my legs, and with temperatures nearing a balmy six degrees, serious smells were now being liberated from the muddy depths of the tepid water. Word had obviously spread of the joys of the race and there was a really good turnout, especially among the younger contingent.

By now familiar faces, home-made cakes (for a charity donation) and the promise of mucky fun attracted a record number of runners and the

organisers expanded the hot beverage selection to include oxtail soup.

The final race, 5 February. A tight pack start and some seriously slippery mud banks but, as in all the races, perfectly placed marshals offered encouraging words.

With smiles on every runner's face and a “to hell with the smell” attitude, the laps flew past. Then it was over, more's the pity.

“Going to do it next year?” Of course. Come with me, you'll love it.



Kate Head makes the leap

PIC: AMELIA WHITING/FACEBOOK

**Marathon (and ultra)
Gazelles: who's
racing where this
spring?**

Saturday 1 April
British Ultrafest 24hr:
Ian Thomas

Sunday 2 April
Bungay: Phil Whiting,
Kate Head, Jason Brunt

Sunday 9 April
Brighton: Sam Barwick,
Emma Jay, Marianne Page,
Tim Sexton
Paris: Imogen Lees

Monday 17 April
Boston (Lincolnshire!):
Jason Brunt, Tim Woods

Sunday 23 April
London: Michael Eccles,
Lou Hurr, Sarah Knapp,
Chris Moore, Peter Rice,
Nick Ross, Alistair
Robinson, Phil Whiting,
Jason Brunt, Rowena Leary

Saturday 27 May
GUCR 145 Miles: Ian
Thomas

Sunday 28 May
Edinburgh: Hannah
Monteverde

June
Spine Flare 108 miles:
Phil Whiting

Saturday 28 July
Kennett & Avon Canal Race
(145 miles): Ian Thomas

Saturday 26 August
Leeds & Liverpool Canal
130 Mile Race: Ian Thomas,
Phil Whiting

Saturday 16 September
Chiltern Wonderland 50:
Amelia Whiting

Friday 29 September
Spartathlon: Ian Thomas

It's marathon season... again

Gazelles are training for 26.2 mile+ events around the country and across the world. We catch up with three first-timers, who take us through their highs and lows

Lou Hurr

London, 23 April

What made me sign up for the London Marathon? Well, the "idea" stems from the knowledge that this year I hit 50. Now, I do like a challenge... especially age-related ones, as I still feel 21.

I entered the ballot but knew all along that I needed a place, so contacted a few charities. Children with Cancer UK contacted me at work and after a short conversation I was offered a place then and there. This was followed by a fair bit of jumping around, shock, more jumping... things had become real.

The school in which I work has supported me throughout with fundraising. Sadly we do have a little girl with kidney cancer, which has made this journey very emotional.

So, training... and working full-time. In the first few weeks it was OK: normal runs after work. I looked up training plans and tweaked them to fit in with my work/family time. Everything seemed to slot in nicely, then... LONG RUNS. Long runs in the dark after work, tired and alone. I was so lucky to have a friend offer to help with my training. She suggested we met during my long run and ran a short distance together. She saved my sanity! Even though the run together was only 5-8km, the support kept me going to target distance. Later, the same friend became my "bike support" for my first 20- and 21-miler. I can't thank her enough. She chatted constantly, getting me through the distances. (We joked we were like Rocky and his trainer.)

Then there were injuries. First, IT band issues, then knee, then the other knee. At one point it seemed my body was slowly falling apart, limbs rotating in pain. Running miles with a "dodgy this and a dodgy that". Luckily, things settled down. I like to think my body just succumbed to the realisation that this marathon lark was going to happen so best just let me get on with it!



Lou at the Freethorpe 10
PIC: IAN EDWARDS

Joining Gazelles has been the best thing ever, although I already had my London place when I joined. The friendships made through the club have been friends for life. Chatting before and after training. Meeting up for races, supporting each other, understanding.

Motivation to get through these last few weeks of training before taper has been tough. The feeling of isolation and total despair on my last 20-miler, totally alone. Hardest run of my life.

The journey of my first marathon has had its ups and downs (especially the hills on the Broadland Half). My life has been overtaken by training; family and friends in a way "put on hold" as everything is based on what to eat, when to run etc. I'm not sure I was prepared for such a total life change.

Would I do this again? Not sure, but then I have yet to know what it is like to actually run 26.2 miles and cross that finishing line...

Marianne Page

Brighton, 9 April

I was training for a half, but I didn't really know how to train and picked up an injury, then I got ill. Actually, I thought I'd never run again. (I distinctly heard my consultant talking about my running under his breath... "You'll regret that when you're older." What does he know?)

But I ran my first half... and when I got my Brighton place I felt sick – excited, but really sick!

The plan I've followed is mapped out week by week by a friend who is a coach... pretty sure he was going to kill me, but it's paying off. It's been hard but I've enjoyed the challenge.

Best bit of training..? When you realise your general pace is quicker, or the caffeine-fuelled 24 miler! (Got to love that "I'm losing my mind" feeling!) Best of all, my long runs have been made so

Emma Jay

Brighton, 9 April

After three years of running and five half-marathons, I made the crazy decision to enter the VLM ballot. Unsurprisingly, I was "OUT", but I got "IN" to Brighton. I considered Bungay Marathon, but having twice run the half, I realised I wanted something new.

As a regular runner, but with work and child commitments, I needed a flexible plan that would push me but didn't require more than four days' running a week. I chose a 16-week VLM intermediate plan. Weeks where I can squeeze in more, I add an extra session. This has worked well for me, and has challenged me at times but not to the point of exhaustion.

The worst part of the training has been fitting it around my life. I often run home from work or use the treadmill in the garage. These are my worst runs, but my



Marianne at the Freethorpe 10
PIC: IAN EDWARDS

much easier by having a running buddy. What's said on the long run stays on the long run!

We all have that run when it hurts all over and we just want to go home. The test is that we stick it out, however much it hurts. Get it done, it makes us stronger. I've been though the "Yes I can do this, I can't wait", to "What have I done?" "Am I getting sick? Please don't cough sneeze or be near me if you're sick." Can I stay healthy, with two kids and immune suppression medication?

Neurotic? Yes, that may just cover it... What a ride it's been. It's been a life-changing experience for me and I've loved it. (PS Some days I hated it.)



Emma at the Freethorpe 10
PIC: IAN EDWARDS

motivation has been my family, who are incredibly supportive and interested (or they certainly pretend well).

The best parts of this wonderful journey have been... The long runs I never would have thought I was capable of a few years ago, and the self-confidence this has given me. The outrageous banter Maz and I have (I don't quite know how we can still look each other in the eye) and the motivation we have given each other along the way. (I really couldn't have done this alone without the singing, animal noises, dancing...)

The commitment has been well worth the sense of achievement. I am now looking forward with an equal measure of fear and excitement to our big day.

Cycling Gazelles

Richard Gilham

There are plenty of cycling events taking place over the next few months. Here's a list of forthcoming local cycle sportives – generally 25, 50, 70 and 100 miles. Find out more on the Facebook page.

Cycling pace is between 12-15 mph (much slower on the hills...). Come along, try one of the shorter routes. Also occasional social groups on Sunday mornings (20-30 miles).

Please note: Third-party insurance is not included in any of these events nor for Gazelles social cycling events. British Cycling provides a range of insurance schemes for the occasional cyclists, commuters and for those regular eventers.

Sunday 30 April
Tour de Broads (South)
Great Yarmouth Sea Life Gardens
www.tourdebroads.com/product/tour-de-broads-south/

Sunday 14 May
Spring Classics Sportive
Swanton Morley
www.norfolkcycleevents.co.uk/spring-classic-sportive.html

Sunday 30 July
Cycling Weekly Suffolk Spinner Sportive
Otley College, Suffolk
www.ukcyclingevents.co.uk/events/cycling-weekly-suffolk-spinner-sportive/

Sunday 6 August
Norfolk Sportive
Swanton Morley (includes 150 mile option...)
www.norfolkcycleevents.co.uk/norfolk-sportive.html

Saturday 12 August
Wiggle Steeplechase Sportive
Huntingdon Racecourse
www.ukcyclingevents.co.uk/events/wiggle-steeple-chase-sportive/

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Sunday 20 August

Tour de Broads (North)
Hoveton Hall
www.tourdebroads.com/product/tour-de-broads-north/

Sunday 3 September

Black Shuck Sportive
Holt Rugby Club
www.norfolkcyclingevents.co.uk/black-shuck-sportive.html

Sunday 17 November

Tour de Norfolk
Norfolk Showground
<https://www.tourdenorfolk.co.uk>

Sunday 1 October

Autumn Classic Sportive
Swanton Morley
www.norfolkcyclingevents.co.uk/autumn-classic-sportive.html

Sunday 29 October

Wiggle Royal Flyer Sportive
Norfolk Showground
www.ukcyclingevents.co.uk/events/wiggle-the-royal-flyer-sportive/

I'd just finished the Freethorpe 10 and was standing near the finish line as I'd just overtaken a work colleague and wanted to see her come in. Another young lady smiled and said "hello" as she ran past, and I assumed a case of mistaken identity.

She walked back down to see me when she'd finished and could obviously tell by my puzzled look that I didn't know who she was. She introduced herself and said she'd been hoping to see me for years; she was a childhood friend of my youngest daughter and had lived on the same street as us. She said she used to watch me from her bedroom window when I ran past her house and always thought how much fun it looked, and this is what had motivated and inspired her to take up running when she was older.

So we never know who we motivate when we're out there enjoying what we do.

NIGEL BULLEN

The mettle behind the medals: what it

The Valentine 10km is Gazelles' flagship race, forming Prior Grand Prix. But while the 600 participants ran for organisation. Race director STEPHEN SADD talks us

 Before we can even think about staging the race itself, we have to get clearance from Richard Polley, chair of the Athletics Norfolk Road Running Committee.

 Always have a plan B, in case the weather is unusually bad and we have to sort out another date on which we can use the venue.

 Make sure the date does not interfere with any other race dates and the venue is available.

 Get an adjudicator and a referee for the race.

 Make sure we can organise enough marshals to cope with the amount of entries.

 Advertise our race on our website, arrange an online entries website and chip timing provider.

 Get a road race licence.

 Get the bibs printed.

 Arrange for St. John's Ambulance to attend and make sure they know their positions on race day.

 Inform the police, local councils and the parish. Hand out leaflets out to houses around the course.

 Make sure there are no events at the village hall (where the water station is).

 Finalise sponsorship and stall from Pilch sports.



"Gazelles in training" at the start/finish
PIC: IAN EDWARDS

 Obtain an amp and microphone to announce results etc.

 Bag up all the envelopes with the correct names of the entrants, plus a bib number and timing chip, then put them in alphabetical order. Sort out baggage labels.

 Get enough water supplied.

 Buy and engrave all the medals and trophies.

 Make sure the lay-bys at the start/finish are closed off so no cars are parked there on the day.

 Arrange car parking spaces, signs and dedicated car park marshals.

 Put up all the signs around the course and down every back road approaching the main course, plus of course all the km markers.



That's a lot of medals

PIC: IAN EDWARDS

takes to stage Gazelles' Valentine 10km

part of both the county championships and the Leathes the bling, behind the scenes required precise through what it takes to put on a successful race.



Final preparations at the start/finish line

PIC: IAN EDWARDS

-  Collect the gantry and clock from Richard Polley.
-  Make sure we have a working horn for the start, two vehicles for the race with lights on top, a tail-end bike and two other bikes.
-  Ensure every marshal knows their duties on race day.
-  After the race, make sure the venue is clean and tidy and the water station cleared up.

-  Drive around the course and collect all the signs. Return the gantry and clock.
-  Get home and empty the trailer full of signs, pins, tape water etc. Put it all back in the shed.
-  File a race report to Richard Polley and fill in forms for Run Britain to show that procedures were carried out successfully.
-  Climb in my chair and collapse, feeling proud all went well.



Race director Stephen Sadd takes the mike

PIC: IAN EDWARDS

Questions and answers

Michael Eccles

Did you do any sports when you were at school?

I would try my hand at any sport and played for all the school teams I could: football, cricket, athletics, basketball and even chess (although I kept this quiet at the time). Out of school I mainly played football in the winter and cricket in the summer and fitted some running around these.

Favourite place for a walk/run in Norfolk

Anywhere off-road. When I lived the other side of the city, I regularly ran around Mousehold. Now I mainly run around Colney or Marriott's way and I love the fact that the cinder track is right behind my house.

Most memorable race

Last year's London Marathon was special. Having watched the race every year since I was about 10, I knew I wanted to do it one day. My partner Elaine and my son Billy (9) came down to watch; they sat in the stand at Blackheath at the start and followed at various other points. Seeing me (and the other thousands of runners) take part with both the best in the world and the fancy-dress runners has really caught Billy's imagination.

Locally, my favourite event is the Round Norfolk Relay. I ran it for the first time when I was 15 and went round on the minibus for the full duration of the race as I had no other way of getting home.

Favourite place for a local drink

I'm not a pub person, but will enjoy a drink after a cricket match with team-mates and opposition and have a chat and a laugh about the game that day.

Most inspiring sportsperson

I think certain *moments* in sport can be more inspiring than the person,

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from Page 7 but I normally like the people who never give up or who are a bit different and do things their own way. Someone like Tony McCoy, who would do whatever it took to win. Or in running someone like Paula Radcliffe, who never gave anything less than 100% and wasn't afraid to front-run a marathon.

When I run, I'm currently listening to...

Normally my son Billy or daughter Eva talking all the way round at Parkrun! But seriously, I don't understand the need for music when running.

The thing that's got me fitter/faster is...

Keeping it simple, doing things properly and not taking any shortcuts – I've always thought running is not a complicated sport: more miles put the effort in on the quality/hard days and it'll get better.

My last supper would be...

What a boring question!

MICHAEL ECCLES WAS TALKING TO RICHARD GILHAM



Michael at the Valentines 10km
PIC: IAN EDWARDS

Wymondham 20 – 26 March 2017



Andrew Hammond, Kate Head, Chris Moore, Mark Thorpe, Imogen Lees, Phil Whiting, Lou Hurr, Anne Ellen
PIC: MARK THORPE

Phil Whiting and Mark Thorpe

A great day's running (writes Phil Whiting) – it was a real inspiration to see Mark Thorpe and Andrew Hammond dig deep to nail their first 20, with support from Chris Moore.

The marathon ladies did great too: well done Imogen Lees, Louise Hurr and Kate Head – a really great strong race, looking good to smash those marathons! Another predictably strong race from the usual suspects: Rowena Leary, Jason Brunt, Alistair Robinson and Michael Eccles, plus age-category wins for Anne Ellen and Jeremy Rogers.

We also had brilliant support from our chair Sam Barwick, roadside with the (non-vegan!) jelly babies, and photos from Rob Grant-Parke. Oh, and I managed a PB (somehow I've never raced a 20 before!). I started the day tired and grumpy, and finished the race feeling elated. A good day to be a runner, and a great day to be a Gazelle.

What a lovely report from Phil (writes Mark Thorpe) – the man is a machine. It felt so good to be a member of what

has to be the friendliest club in Norfolk. I'd never run further than 15 miles before and probably wouldn't have done without the support of everyone. I feel really proud of myself but more proud to be a member of the Gazelles. Thank you for having me. Oh, and super controlled running by Kate Head, who pipped me on the line. Well done, everyone.



The herd, working as a team
PIC: ROB GRANT-PARKE

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the newsletter – please let us know if you found this “magazine” format easy to read or you'd prefer to revert to a single-page style. And don't forget, if you've got any stories for us, please let us know... before we collar you at club and make you write them anyway.

RICHARD GILHAM AND IMOGEN LEES