

Essex Veterans & Junior Cross Country Championships

Saturday 20 November

Writtle College

The Essex Cross-Country Championships for Veteran and junior athletes was held at Writtle College last Saturday. The veteran races were held over an interesting and challenging 8k course. A stream crossing and a steeply banked lake which the runners had to circumnavigate twice caused some severe bottlenecks and anguish for unsuspecting runners, many of whom were reduced to a walk during this section.



Star of the show for the Ilford AC squad was Steve Philcox who put in a great performance to finish 2nd in the M50+ age category race to take the silver medal in 31mins 54 secs for the 8km event. Next home in 25th spot was Neil Crisp in 35mins 07 secs. There was a rare appearance on the country for Tony Hyde in 30th place in 35mins 36 secs and Tony Nixon completed the team's scorers in 49th and 5th in the M60 grouping with 37 mins

35 secs. Ernie Forsyth returned from injury in 91st and 43 mins 16secs, with Terry Knightley close behind with 43 mins 42 secs for 99th. Gary Floate finished 104th in 45 mins 06 secs and Rob Sargent placed 11th (47m 19s) and Martin Clarke 114th (47m 48s).

Ilford AC were highly placed 5th in the team event and to their great credit even managed to close a 'B' team in 19th place out of 20 scoring teams.

Nicola Hopkinson continued her good form on the country placing 45th in the womens F35+ 8km race with a time of 42mins 21 secs and finished 18th in the F45 grouping. Dianne Crisp continued to show improvement finishing 65th in 45 mins 09 secs and Julia Galea came home 94th with 49mins 08 secs. Nichola Fairbairn (53mins 51secs) completed the club's team scorers in 97th. Also in action were Doris gaga with 101st (56mins 41 secs) and Julie Gillender in 109th (60mins 32 secs).



The Ilford team were the 17th club in the event.



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In the junior Races the Ilford U15 Boys quartet ran exceptionally well to finish with the bronze medal in the team competition. They were led home by Mungo Prior who had a storming run to just miss out on an individual podium spot finishing 4th in 13mins 43 secs. Not far behind Aaron Samuel produced a quality performance to come home 8th clocking 14.02. They were well supported by Jack Halil who chipped in with 15mins 20secs for 28th place and Leo Ronson whose 16.26 for 45th place closed the team for the bronze.

Florence Marathon

Sunday 27 November

The Florence marathon is held on a fast flat course around the historical city pasting all the landmarks including Cathedral Square and Ponte Vecchio. Paul Holloway of Ilford AC travelled out to Italy for the event and put in a superb performance to take over 4 minutes off his personal best time finishing 94th in 2 hours 47 minutes 36 secs in a field of over 8000 finishers