



## Essex Road Relays 2016

A cool overcast Saturday morning greeted Essex road runners as Harwich Runners staged the County Road Relays for the 2nd year in succession. Ilford AC fielded 3 teams with some good success coming away with 2 silver medals. The strong coastal winds of last year were thankfully absent on this occasion affording competitors the opportunity to record some fast times over the 5k measured course along the Dovercourt seafront. Not including a few “no shows” and incomplete teams 14 clubs closed 62 full teams at the final reckoning.

In the male open race held over 4 legs a storming opening run by Springfield’s lead-off man Scott Cousins posted the intent of a very strong Strider’s team. He was chased all the way by Ilford’s Malcolm Muir (16.9.93) but the gap had grown to over 30 seconds by the first changeover. Southend were back in third. Ilford’s Tom Gardner (16.9.58) put in a sterling effort to redress the deficit overtaking and putting Ilford in pole position at the 2nd change but with the advantage less than 10 seconds Alex Richards (16.52.03) came under severe pressure on leg 3 and Springfield’s 4th leg runner was clear with a seemingly unassailable lead. A chasing Blair McWhirter (16.13.45) was able to close slightly but eventually ran out of distance for silver and a total time of 1.5.24.99.

In what is perhaps the strongest category in the county the competition was fierce between the cream of the over 50’s and some excellent times recorded over the 3 legs. Although leading throughout gold medallists Colchester Harriers (total time 54.50.22) were pushed all the way by Ilford AC’s silver squad (total time 55.24.74) comprising of Terry Knightley (18.53.57), Neil Crisp(18.36.98) and Steve Philcox(17.54.19) with the winning margin being a mere 34 seconds at the end.

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Tony Nixon ran the first leg of an incomplete Ilford over 50’s B team clocking a very respectable time of 19.26.66.

Ilford Ladies also put in a creditable performance in the women’s over 45 section with Julie Gillender (29.13.94) handing over to Julia Galea (26.11.63) before leaving it to Dianne Crisp (25.35.95), returning to competition after an injury break of 9 months, to bring the team home in a total time of 1.21.1.52.

Fastest times of the day were posted by Scott Cousins of Springfield Striders (15.37.12) and Sarah Stradling of Colchester Harriers (18.11.96) and, accepting that this was only the 2nd



running on this course, these both now stand as course records.

## **Brentwood Half Marathon**

Sunday 20 March 2016

A field of over 2800 lined up on a calm Sunday morning for the Brentwood Half Marathon, including 12 entries from Ilford AC. Best of the Ilford squad was Sam Rahman in 28th place in 1 hr 19mins 24s off a steady pace. Next home for the club was Robin McNelis in 1h 20m 48s for 34th and 4th in the M40 category. Steve Philcox placed 46th and 2nd in the M50 age group with 1h 21m 45s , while Neil Crisp's 1h 23m 22s gave him 4th in the same category and 61st overall. The squad combined to take 3rd spot in the team event.

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The Ilford club's ladies were in good form with Jenni Sheehan heading the challenge in 24th female with a new personal best of 1h 35m 16s. Bree Nordin was close behind in 27th and 1st in the F55 category with 1h 36m 25s. Mel Jones rewrote her best time for the distance with 1h 38m 24s for 36th spot and a win in the F45 grouping. There was a big improvement for Rachel Halpin of over 8 minutes to lower her best to 1h 47m 54s while Julia Galea also gained a new personal best time of 1h 57m 49s and victory in the F60 age category.

Also in action were Peter Spelman with 1h 55m 41s, Victoria Morgan, in her debut at the distance, 2h 06m 28s and Doris Gaga, who had a race to forget, 2h 26m 08s.

## **Other Races**

Elsewhere John Batchelor placed 134th out of 212 in the Serpentine monthly 5K last Friday, but was 1st M75, breaking his own age-group course record set last month by 13 sec with 22:21 and finishing 3rd overall on the age-percentage table.

Ilford AC (Norfolk section) fielded a full squad in the Broadland Half Marathon held on Sunday 13th March.

The race, which was hosted by Norwich Road Runners, was centred around the picturesque Broadland village of South Walsham and attracted some 400 entrants.

It was a superb spring day in full sunshine and light winds but the course belied its



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geographical location and proved a stiff test for the competitors who had to tackle some unwelcome uphill sections in the last 3 miles of the race.

The most notable performance, and first home for Ilford AC, was by Paul Emery who recorded a time of 1:42:15 for 122nd place. He was happy with his time as it was only his second attempt at the distance and first Half Marathon in an Ilford vest since becoming a club member some 6 years ago.

The race was won by James Ashton of Norwich Road Runners in a time of 01:16:35.

On a cool Sunday Morning ideal for running, over 3,500 runners set off on the 'Hampton Court Palace Half Marathon'.

Ilford's Warrior of the year and staunch Royalist 'Billy Green' was first Ilford Athlete home with a commendable 1:49:35 which was a PB for the up and coming young athlete.

