



Dianne Crisp

**Name:** Dianne Crisp (nee Cater)

**Born:** 1962

**Date Joined:** 1st April 1976. I ran at school and my teacher said I should go to a club. So as Kim & Tracey Trunley were at my school (Warren) it was only natural that I went along to Ilford Athletic Club. I first trained with Margaret Gilham and then moved onto Fred Plumm's group. I can remember a very early session was a road run around Highbury Gardens chasing Debbie Church.

**Personal Bests:**

**Track**

400m: 62.2 8/8/81 Swindon Southern League U20

800m: 2.19.0 30/8/81 Parliament Hill Open Meeting U20

1500m: 4.51.4 17/5/81 Hornchurch Essex Champs U20

3000m: 10.53.3 19/4/80 Chelmsford Southern League U20

10,000m: 45.43.5 5/9/2012 Kingston Vets AC Champs V45

**Road**

5k: 21:45 27/8/2012 Barking Park V50

5m: 31.08 7/4/84 Victoria Park SL

10k: 41.06 25/3/84 Battersea Park SL

10m: 68.3 6/11/82 North Weald Rainbow 10 SL

Half Marathon: 1.40.20 8/2/2009 Great Bentley V45

**First Club Race:** Was the Essex County Cross country at Chingford 1976 where



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our junior team managed silver team position.

**Favourite Race:** My favourite race is any Cross country and I love a relay. When I was first running I just did track, cross country races and road relays.

### **Notable Performances:**

In December 1977 I was part of the bronze team Intermediate Essex County WAAA cross country at Southend. We used to run at Eastway Cycle Circuit for a lot of relays. On 31/3/79 our Ilford team finished in first slot. I was running as an Intermediate a few days before my 17th birthday. Eastway Cycle Circuit was later demolished to make way for the Olympic Park at Stratford. How lucky are we that the place of choice for the replacement was Forest Road Hainault.

I was part of the Southern Counties 3x800m bronze position Intermediate team on 3/6/78. Then went onto be part of the Southern Counties 3x800m winning relay team on 23/8/1980.

I was very proud of representing the Essex Schools at cross country too. I also ran in the Civil service sports day when I was working there from 17 onwards, back then you used to get a day off to go and run : )

### **Typical Weeks Training:**

#### **Winter**

I would train at Cricklefields on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Often Bob the grounds man would say the cinder track was too wet to run on so we would run around the top track which was where the Isaac Newton School play area is now. It was a cinder track but it wasn't easy to run around the bends as they were very sharp. The area was mainly used by the throwers, who to name a couple were Christine Whitmore and Stephan Jalowecki .

On Saturdays and Sundays it was Hainault runs, often with refreshments afterwards ( weak tea or Ribena) in Edgars Tea room with a game of table tennis and maybe 'round the table.' You had to hit the ball and then run to



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the other end of the table while the next person in the queue hit it back. It was easy when there were a lot playing but as they got knocked out it was pretty well impossible to get to the other end in time! Even the sprinters struggled : )

## **Summer**

I used to train at the track at Cricklefields on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Sundays. There was a building where the car park is now with changing rooms and a room where we used to meet before the track session and do some weights. On Wednesdays we would meet in Mayesbrook Park and do some efforts on the grass. Sometimes on Saturdays we would run at Hainault or train at Bedford's Park or occasionally Woodford track.

## **Favourite Sessions:**

**Who is the most Famous Athlete you've seen:** I saw Zola Budd run her first race in the UK at Dartford in April 1984. I have a photo of her arriving at the track and got out of the car with trainers on!

**How would you improve the sport:** Employ more Coaches.

**Favourite Athlete or Sportsman:** Retired Steve Cram..... present day Laura Muir

**What other sports do you follow:** Like to watch rugby and any other sport with England competing

**Best Country Visited:** Borneo, Australia & USA, All great so can't really pick one.

**Favourite Food & Drink:** After a race, Pam's cake, bread pudding and Tea : )

**Favourite TV Shows:** I love a murder mystery. Recently ... Stranger and Safe on Netflix.

**Last Film Seen :** Frozen 2



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**Last Book Read:** Girl, Woman, Other... by Bernadine Evaristo

**Favourite Band Singer:** David Bowie, Robbie Williams, Queen, Ricky Wilson, Anna Marie...to name a few.

**Last Theatre Attended:** The Bank Robbery that went wrong, 9 to 5. Should be seeing Hairspray in May but watch this space.

**Any Pets:** A gold fish called Flop

**What are your aims for next season:** Try to keep running without injury. Do more strength training.

**Tell us a Joke:** Q: What starts with E, ends with E, and has only 1 letter in it?

A: Envelope.





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## A SHORT HISTORY OF ILFORD A.C.

Ilford Athletic Club was formed in 1923 by a group of local sports enthusiasts, who wanted to participate in organised competition against other clubs. At this particular period of time, running and cycling clubs were mushrooming throughout the country, much like the present jogging clubs.

The new Club rented a changing room in the Maypole Inn, Chigwell Row, training and racing cross-country in Hainault Forest.

During the summer, handicap races and relay events were held on an undersized dirt track at Cricklefield.

Over the succeeding years, membership increased, strengthening both mens and ladies teams, especially in cross-country events, resulting in early local and county successes.

It was in the post-war era, however, that Ilford produced an amazing sequence of cross-country team and individual results. A brilliant squad of 15-17 year old youths won the County, Southern and National team titles and then, incredibly, repeated the process again the following year. Meanwhile, the ladies, not to be outdone, did exactly the same as the lads, but went one better by producing a National winner, 17 year old Phyllis Perkins. Phyllis was to lead the ladies team to several more National team titles. (Years later Alan Perkins won the mens National)

These exceptional young athletes were the pathfinders for the many successes the Club enjoyed during the years to follow.

Two further events of significance which occurred about this time were the merger of Valentines Sports Club and the laying of a cinder track at Cricklefield. The former produced the transfer of the race walking section to Ilford, which, in turn, blossomed in the course of time into a winning National team, lead by Roger Mills who later crowned a fine walking career with a bronze medal in the European Games.

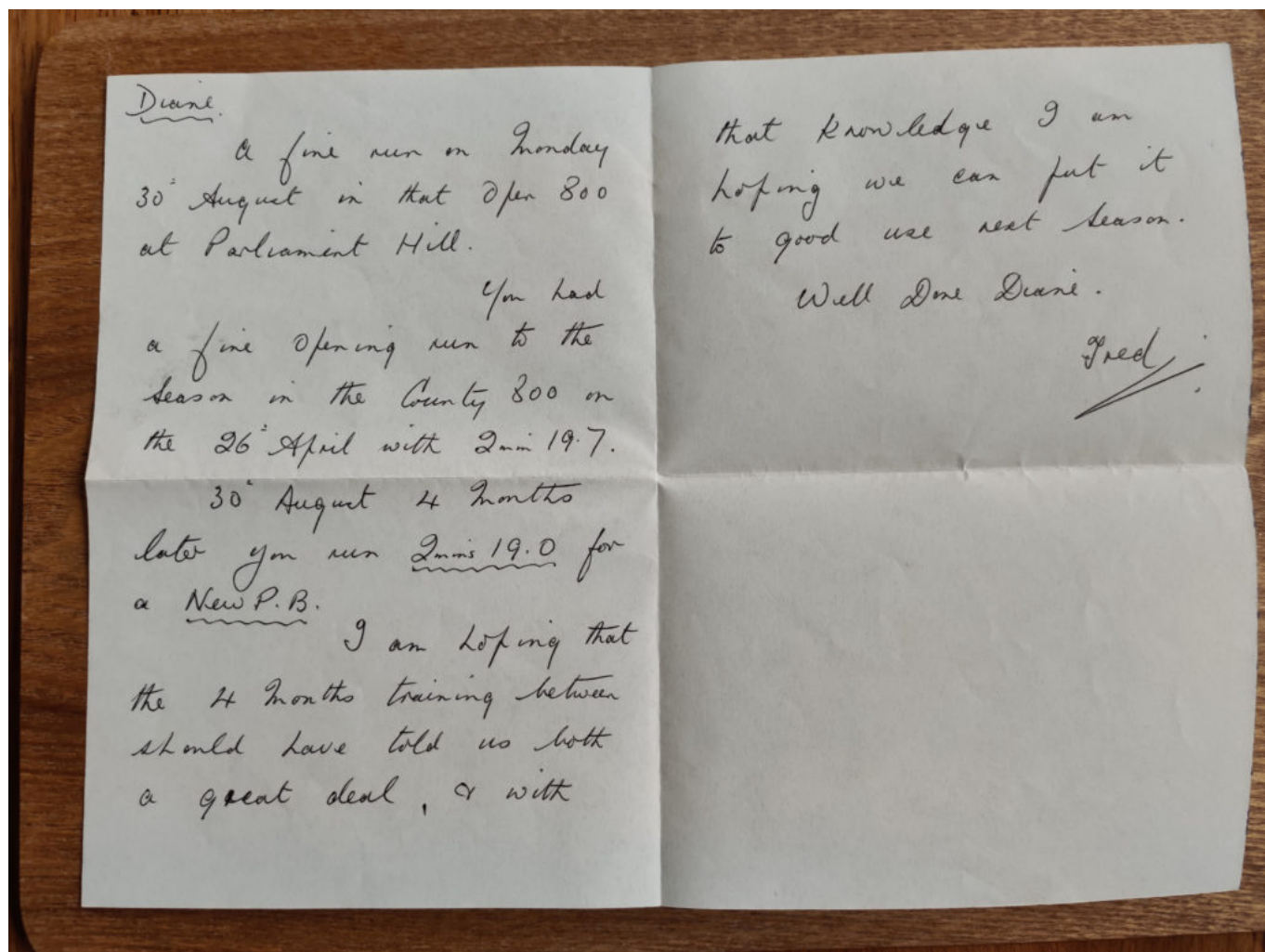
The new cinder track was another turning point. 'One of the best in Southern England' was the approved view, and athletes responded accordingly. Ilford became one of the finest mixed Clubs in the country, boasting of many sprint and hurdle internationals in the years that followed.

Perhaps just as important, though, was the atmosphere that existed at Cricklefield - friendly and relaxed, where the ordinary Club member was every bit as important as the Club stars.

Since those halcyon years, the Club has turned full circle. Our 1950's cinder track has been replaced by the excellent all-weather track and the Chigwell Row winter headquarters is spanking new. Can history repeat itself?



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### **Why do we not attract young female distance runners to Ilford, and how can we change that.**

I think we have more ladies running at Ilford than I can ever remember at the present time. I think this is due to the Wednesday Runners and the good communication of the leaders for the group. Also the leaders always make sure whatever pace you want to run at there is someone to stay with you and the same at the Hainault training sessions. Rob Sargent provides well organised training sessions on Tuesday's and Thursday's at the track and other venues with a wide variety of groups to train with. The other running groups are also flourishing but there is only so many runners that one coach can manage.

There are a lack of younger women that want to run long distance. I think there are a lot more other sports activities around now gyms, classes, dancing, jujitsu & cross fit that maybe the younger ladies are taking part in /competing in. I remember being approached at school athletics competitions by coaches/club representatives asking if I belonged to a club maybe that doesn't happen now? As most coaches/club representatives are volunteers and are



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working full time as well.

Maybe sports teachers aren't referring the students to clubs now as I was? I've worked in a high school now for 15 years and I think there have been two occasions when a teacher asked me about my running club.

**Back in the day did you have any specific eating plan or did you stick to certain foods when training for a specific event. Where Energy bars or gels used a lot?**

No, I just ate what my Mum cooked! Lots of Veggies Potatoes and Meat back then. I remember my dinner being left on a saucepan of water on the stove with a plate over it for the steam to keep it warm if I was late in from training as there were no microwaves around then. I didn't really eat any fast food but usually Friday was Fish & chip night.

No, there were no energy bars or gels around then either. I do remember going into Ilford Swimming baths to get a packet of sweets after training Tooty Frooties were my favourite.

**I see you went to Warren Senior School in Chadwell Heath, as I did (Terry Knightly) and your running started from there so who were your P E teachers there that encouraged you to join Ilford AC.**

Cassie Bastock was my PE teacher at Warren who used to run the lunchtime athletics club in the summer. My form Tutor in Year 5 was Mr Avis who was also a PE Teacher so was encouraging.

**Did you meet Neil at the club ?**

Yes, Neil and his brother Simon started training at Havering AC when they moved to Chadwell Heath in 1978. By coincidence there was a running couple who lived just opposite their house.... Pam & Dave Jones. Neil was soon taken under Dave's wing to help with his marathon training for the 1983 Gillette London Marathon and then followed down to Ilford track sessions. Where he used to join in with Fred's group...he used to tag on the back of our ladies group! I did used to travel on the same 66 bus to Newbury Park when I was 16 and working at Nat West as Neil was going to School finishing his A Levels. Neil & I had our first





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dance at our mutual friend and Ilford club member Alison Hayes wedding on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1984 soon followed by our wedding on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1985.

**As you have been a member all this time Did you ever go the Famous and Legendary Ilford AC Disco's in the late 70's that used to be held at Ilford Rugby club in Gordon Road in Ilford ? I went to a few and they were fantastic and wondered what your memories of them were.**

Oh Yes, thanks for reminding me about them. Yes, they used to be the highlight of my social calendar. I used to go along sporting flares, platform shoes and stripy tank tops!!!! Obviously the up to date gear at the time : ) I remember dancing the night away there it was always rammed with club members and their friends. My brother Paul used to DJ for Ilford sometimes as he had lots of vinyl back then.

**Have you still got your Southern Counties and National Medals and are they on display in the Crisp household ?**

Yes, I have my southern counties medals still and some cloth badges that were given out for representing Essex and the WAAA. I suppose they were for sewing on your track suit.

**What was your worst injury ?**

I had a few twisted ankles when I was younger that kept me out for a few weeks at a time but nothing else that I can remember. One where I fell down the bottom couple of stairs at Nat West, probably due to the platform shoes!!!

I have had plantar fasciitis that got sorted with exercises and shoe orthotics. I had two injuries more recently that kept me out for a year each, a back/hip injury and then a knee injury. Many thanks to Sharon Honey for keeping me well and running.



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### **Who is your current greatest running rival ?**

Trying to keep my body in one piece to keep on running : ) I think when you compete you get to know the people around you and it's always good over a season if you can pick off a few of them from other clubs as you get race fit.

### **Did you gently nudge your 2 girls in to joining the club, or was it something they were always very keen to do?**

Not really, although they always used to see us going out running and sometimes joined us. The girls used to do lots of different sports when they were younger, they used to swim, trampoline, basketball and play badminton. They used to run for their school too. It's only in later years that they joined the club. Jen does run a lot and as a PE Teacher is passing her love of running on to her students. Natalie has got into Cross fit and only runs once a week now.

### **If you could pick your dream 4 team ladies relay team based on runners at the club you have run with over the years - who would be the other 3 members?**

Pam Jones, Kim & Tracey Trunley as they always encouraged and pushed me. Thanks Girls.

Also, Rita Ennis, Jill Plater & I won the southern counties 3 X 800m together so one of my favourites. The ladies I ran with recently in the Essex Road Relays Pauline Tester & Alison Sale are another that I need to mention.

I have to end by mentioning an occasion at Chelmsford, Melbourne Fields, Essex Road relays, when we had a 'full packet of Crisps' out Natalie led off in the mix, Me in the middle and Jen on the glory leg! With Neil doing his best as always for the men's team.

### **Apart from Terry Knightly, who has had the most hairstyles at your time at the club?**



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No question, definitely Gary Floate : )