



Billy Green

**Name:** Billy Green

**Born:** 25th February Forest Gate Hospital (It says 'Born in West Ham' on my Birth Certificate which I am particularly proud of!)

**Date Joined** August 2008

**Personal Bests:**

5k 22:40

5m 37:43

10k 48:00

10m 86:19

HM 1:51:11

Marathon 4:19:22

**First Club Race:** Remember it well. Havering Elvis 5m.. Running with Satha who had just joined the club and after 4m we completely blew up (well not literally!) and as we gasped for air Pam Jones came past and with the famous wonderbra phrase of the day just said 'hello boys'.

**Favourite Race:** I do enjoy the Vitality London 10k when a large group of us from the club meet up at Stratford, travel down to Green Park on the tube in club gear and pitch up our flag. We all wait and make sure everyone has finished then a few of us will go for a meal. Great memories of what seems like a completely different world right now.



**Notable Performances:** I don't really have any notable performances as you can see from my P.B.s above. I started running quite late but had done a few London 10k's and I can remember my first aim was to get under an hour for 10k which I was pleased to get. As I progressed my next aim was under 2 hours for a Half Marathon and again I achieved that. We wont talk about my Marathon aims....well, we will actually in the next question!

**Biggest Disappointment (s):**

I have two:- Firstly 'The Marathon'. I first attempted London in 2011 and with no real commitment to training got 4:49. A year later I put in the training but was disappointed with



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a 4:19 although it was a 30 minute improvement. The next year I did my 3rd London in a row. This was going to be it – my last running ‘goal’, the sub 4 hr marathon. Training went well. Myself and Rachel Halpin did the long miles in all weathers and by mid January I felt really good. Did a Cross Country race in January however and with my foot embedded in the mud I fell backwards and really hurt my back. Not really knowing Sharon Honey too well then I decided the best option was to just carry on training but take lots of pain killers. Of course this didn’t work and I was getting through more and more to mask the pain. Race day I got to Tower Bridge and in complete agony (a combination of taking 4 ibuprofen at the start and it being an unusually hot day and I hadn’t put suncream on) and I actually threw up on the Bridge.

I eventually crawled round in 5:09, came home, threw my medal in the bin, deleted my Facebook account and didn’t race again for another year!!! That famous sulk is still stuff of Ilford AC legend.

Secondly was/is the whole RunEqual movement. For daring to have an opposing view to some others I received a few really nasty private messages via email or messenger.

It started after we hosted our own Elvis race a few years back. First time I was involved in the organisation of an event and for those of you who have done it you will know it involves a lot of work, not just on the day but for weeks and months prior. In the afterglow of what I thought was a great event, messages started appearing on Facebook accusing us of being ‘dinosaurs’ and ‘behind the times’ because women had different age vet categories. To me if you have an issue you raise it with your committee member and it gets discussed and voted on at Elvis meetings. You don’t start petitions / campaigns / T-Shirts and hashtags and criticise the organisers on Social media.

My views haven’t changed. The earlier age categories were done to encourage more women back into racing after having time off to have children. Some say it is an outdated view but I have seen plenty at our club have children and never come back or come back without the same commitment. Not having the same categories however doesn’t make women unequal. When I line up against a woman in a race the fastest of us will win, plain and simple. No woman is unequal on the starting line.

Running has to be the most equal sport in the world. Your age, gender, colour, sexual orientation doesn’t matter and I have witnessed nothing in my times that means anyone is less equal than another person or treated as such, and would be the first to call it out if I did.

The same applies to the distance woman race in Cross Country. Do I think women cant run the same distance as men? Of course I don’t. Most ‘good’ women in Cross country can run as far and faster than me, but I want Cross Country to be accessible to ALL , not just the good



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runners.

Do I think Cross Country is different to road running? Yes.

Look at any Road race and the men/women split is normally 50/50 but at those tough Cross Country races its nowhere near that. If shorter distances gets more women into the sport and we can get more of a 50/50 split then I am all for it. I can remember many a year when we put out 2 or 3 men's teams but couldn't even get one women's team together for some races, and it wasn't just a problem with our club.

I want more women in running and of all abilities and I don't think asking them to run further in Cross Country will achieve that, it will just make it a discipline for the best women or the slower ones with big egos

### **How did you get involved in your various roles at the club?**

Completely by accident. I started off with the Harriers which was started by Martin, Sally, Robin and Pam. I was one of a few who was there every week summer and winter, so when Martin and Sally moved away and Robin and Pam weren't able to do the winter sessions I just inherited the role of taking over The Harriers and my email become the one used for contact when people enquired at the club.

I've been doing it over 12 years now and it gives me great satisfaction seeing people come along thinking they are not 'runners' and seeing them years later compete in tough Cross country events at County and International level, or run marathons.

My Coaching role came the same way I think. I was one of a few at the time who was 'just there' every single week. Some people may find it hard to believe but I genuinely was the guy at the back who said very little. Robbo must have either seen something in me, or decided he needed holiday cover, as he pressed me to do my coaching badges which to be honest was quite scary.

Coming back and from being the guy at the back to being the guy in the middle shouting out instructions felt intimidating but i soon learned how to fake confidence and make people believe in me!

I then became the ladies team manager after Jenni retired from her role to start a family, and was soon asked to manage the men's team too. A year or so later Martin stood down from the excellent work he was doing as Press Officer and nominated me to take over. It came as a complete surprise to me and it was a tough role to take on as I always thought Martins reporting was excellent and therefore a tough challenge to replace him.

My early reports were quite embarrassing with just names, times and placings but a



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combination of reading old race reports and adopting my own style I hope has improved things.

**Typical Weeks Training at your peak** . Ha Ha - I've never had a peak, but typical weeks training right now is something like this:-

Monday - 4 or 5 miles tempo

Tuesday - Robbos Hill or tempo session

Wednesday - Taking the Harriers session

Thursday - Assisting coaching at the track

Friday - Rest

Saturday - Run up to Raphaels, run 5k with Jimmy and/or Sharon then run home (10k in total)

Sunday - For the last few years most of my Sunday long runs have been going out and helping someone who was aiming for the London Marathon. All the training without the commitment of the race!

Did a few years with Rachel Halpin, a year with Satha, a year with H90 Nicki and currently with Julia. I remember when I 'kind of' trained for my first marathon. I had absolutely no motivation for going for a long run on my own. My second I trained with Satha who was also running it (until the selfish git got run over!!!) and really enjoyed the company and motivation it gave me so am more than happy to be that other person for someone.

**Favourite Sessions:** Summer sessions after work at Hainault Forest. The hills are a killer, but great company and banter with team mates.



**Favourite race distance:** 10k

**Favourite event - Track, Road or Cross Country -** Cross Country

**What advice would you give our current crop of youngsters?** - Listen to your coaches and don't let girlfriends/boyfriends detract you from your commitment to the sport. Enjoy your sport most of all though. If you don't enjoy it, you won't stick with it.

**Who is the most Famous Athlete you Trained with or would like to train with:**

Trained with - Pam Jones and Andy Catton.

Would like to train with - Kriss Agabousi. He has such an infectious laugh and I often see him at West Ham, so we could have a tough session, with a few laughs thrown in, then back to the hut for tea and a chat about the Hammers.

**How would you improve the sport** - More commitment to running at schools. My school did football but no other sports. I loved football and played to a good level (I was in Charltons Youth team for a while) but may have discovered a love for running had we done it at school.

I look around at the young adults now, especially at Cross Country and think I would love to



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have been doing that at that age. Even if i wasn't that good it's such a healthy thing to be involved in.

**Favourite Athlete or Sportsman:** My Dad started taking me to West Ham when I was 5 years old and for me Trevor Brooking and Billy Bonds were absolute legends to me. Not like today when players are at a club for a year or 2 - These 2 were still at the club all through my school years. Been fortunate enough to meet both of them. Billy Bonds fleetingly a couple of times but have had a few chats with Trevor Brooking and anyone who has met him will tell you what an absolute gentleman he is. Wants to know all about you, and genuinely takes an interest.

In running Mo Farah, Kelly Holmes and Jessica Ennis-Hill have been true ambassadors for British sport.



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SIR TREVOR BROOKING





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BILLY BONDS

**What other sports do you follow:** Football, Cricket, American Football, Rugby and women's beach volley

**Best Country Visited** America without a doubt. Memphis, Nashville, Vegas and New Orleans are great places to visit but I would like to see so much more of America. Lack of funds have prevented me in recent years (last 3 years a caravan park in Yarmouth!!) but I'm sure I'll be back again if we ever get our old world back again!

**Favourite Food & Drink :** Paella, Steak and Chips, Bourbon Whisky and a nice Beer .  
Not all in the same meal I hasten to add!

**Favourite TV Shows:** Doctor Who, Once upon a time (an American fantasy drama), Only Fools and Horses, Bagpuss, Match of the day (only watch it if West Ham win. Does Jimmy Hill still present it?)

**Last Film Seen :** Bill and Ted Face The Music - It was most excellent dude.

**Last Book Read :-** Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II. Other than that I love a good autobiography recent reads include Francis Rossi, Chas Hodges

**Favourite Band Singer:**

Aaah music - Glad you asked ☐

Music is my No 1 love in life. I remember clearly when Elvis died and the reaction that the event made in the media. It was absolutely huge. I instantly became a fan when I heard his songs being played and still am. In fact I got married at Elvis' home in Graceland, Memphis Tennessee.

I can remember sneaking in to my first gig at the Bridgehouse in Canning Town to see The Cockney Rejects when I was only about 14 and ever since I have been to a concert most weeks of my life since (up to March 2020!!!).

Whilst my friends were at discos, parties and clubs I could always be found at a gig. I so wish I had kept a diary but bands I have seen include The Rolling Stones, The Who, Iron Maiden, Whitesnake, The Sweet, AC/DC, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino, BB King, Katherine Jenkins, The Sex Pistols, Black Sabbath, Gary Glitter, The Clash, The Darkness, Billy Idol, Motorhead, The Specials, Selecter, Bad Manners, Tina Turner, Rod



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Stewart, Madness, Brian Ferry, Kylie Minogue, Katherine Jenkins, Suzi Quatro, Judge Dread, The Sweet, Splodgenessabounds, Jilted John, The Jam, Sham 69, Cock Sparrer, The 4 Skins, Cockney Rejects, The Macc Lads, Status Quo, Wilko Johnson, Squeeze, Aswad, The Wurzels, Chas N Dave, John Otway, Oasis, Ray Davies, David Essex, Shawaddywaddy, .....to name but a few!!!!



CHAS HODGES (CHAS N DAVE)



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KATHERINE JENKINS



SUZI QUATRO

**Last Album Bought or Downloaded** Iron Maiden Live in Mexico on Double Vinyl. Has to be vinyl for me or a CD. Music should be listened to in the best quality available, not a compressed download or stream. **Last Concert Attended:** Normally can be found at a gig every week, but in this new world the last gig I attended was...March 2020. Emily Capell at Dingwalls in North London. Had never heard of her until I saw her supporting The Selecter earlier in February. Thought she was fantastic. Check her out - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yNDw4\\_Gyls](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yNDw4_Gyls)

**Most Famous Person You Have Had Christmas Dinner With :-** Sir Geoff Hurst



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**Any Pets:** A big ginger cat called Johnny,

**What are your aims for next season** A return to normality

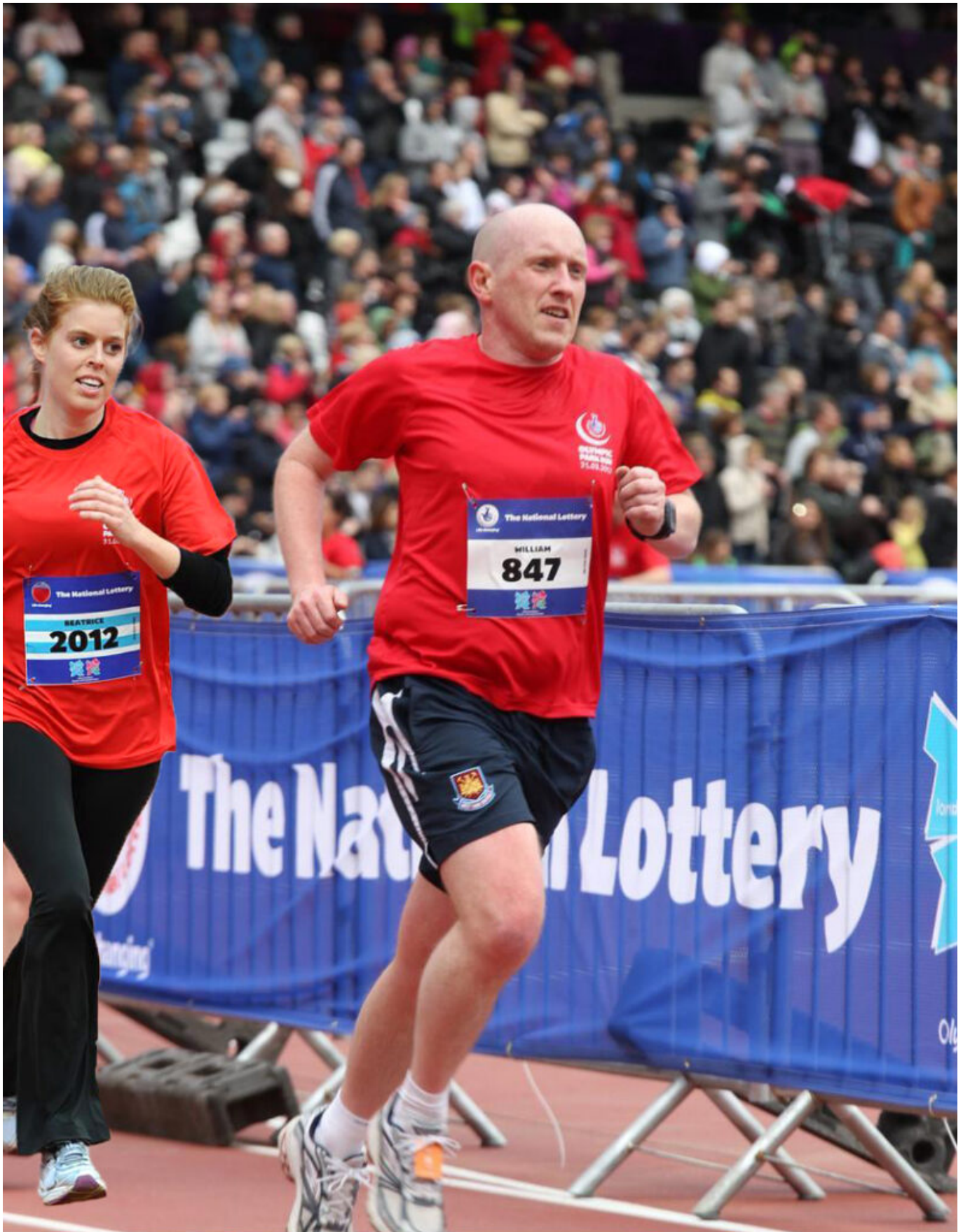
**Tell us a Joke:** In Germany they are preparing for a stricter Covid lockdown by stocking up with sausage and cheese. That's the Wurst Käse scenario.



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Ilford Harriers around 2010



Being chased by a Princess around The Olympic Park



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# BILLY GREEN ANSWERS BACK

**Great Who's Who Billy. If you were allowed 8 people to have a dinner party with who would you choose and why.**

Elvis Presley - Not just the best singer of all time, but someone who changed the way people dress and look.

Bobby Moore. Arguably the greatest Footballer this country has produced, the only English Captain to lift the world Cup and he was a Hammer.

Donald Trump - Hated and Loved in equal measure, a bit like Marmite - and I love Marmite!



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Christine Ohuruogu – A top athlete from Newham. Always seems like she would be fun to be around.

Jesus – In case we run out of Bread and Wine.

Lynda Carter – At her Prime in her Wonder Woman outfit

Clyde Best. One of the first British Black star footballers. Put up with so much but always played with a smile on his face

Katherine Jenkins – A great voice, and a really lovely lady.

### **What is your favourite Olympic memory.**

As a spectator it was a real honour being at the opening day of London 2012 at the new stadium and seeing Jessica Ennis totally dominating the day.

I went with Satha, and the tickets were ones Ilford AC had received, which we both won in a ballot.

In the same Olympics as a memory, nothing can beat Super Saturday and the 3 Golds in 45 minutes.

I'll always remember watching the scenes in the commentary box as Mo Farah sealed his Gold and the third of the 3 golds – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLNYIMRCEdw>

### **What inspired you to take up running?**

After giving up football I just missed doing sport and especially the friendships you make through it. What I learned to love about running is that as long as you do your best in a race you are very rarely disappointed where you finish even if it is last (happened to me once!) In football even if I thought I had a great game, if my team lost I could get really sulky!

### **How did you discover Ilford AC?**

It was a simple case of looking up running clubs on the Internet. Found Ilford AC, sent an email and got a very welcoming email inviting me to come along and give it a try. All these years later and I am the one who gets the emails and invites people to give us a try



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**You are obviously very organised to fit in so many things in addition to running. What's your favourite role within the club?**

I genuinely enjoy my Harriers role. I have seen so many come along on a Wednesday who would never think of themselves as 'runners' and were quite happy to come along and jog around the park, or simply had done parkruns and their one ambition was to do it without stopping. To see them then join the club, buy a Team vest and start 'competing' in races is great to see.

**I see that you were in Charlton's Youth Team. Were there any players that made it to first team and are you still in contact with any of them?**

**In my younger days I used to play with Paul Elliott's brothers. Very classy. Paul Walsh also went to my secondary school but I didn't know him.**

I was good friends with Rob Lee at the time, who had a great career and even ended up at The Hammers. Unfortunately this was well before mobile phones, Facebook etc so when I got that letter that I wasn't required anymore I was unable to contact any of my mates at the club - I guess I just assumed I would always see them 2-3 times a week. I did send a letter via the club asking if they could pass on my number to Lee and a few others but who knows if it was ever passed on?

**Those are some great pics and I'd imagine there are a few more we haven't seen. Which is your favourite 'celeb' pic and why?**

I think perhaps 'Priscilla Presley'. To spend 5 minutes with her chatting about Elvis was a fantastic experience.

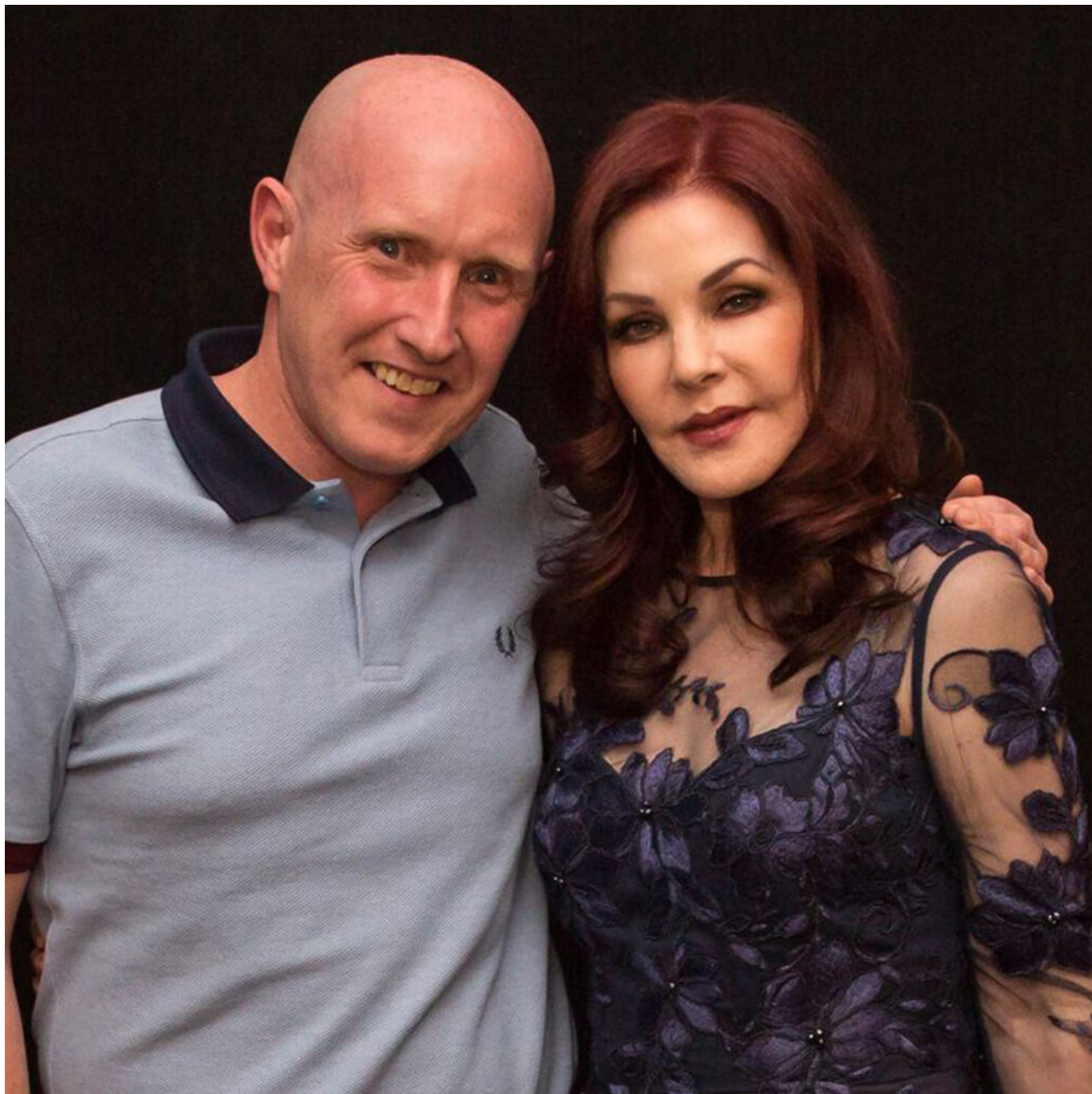
Bonds, Brooking, Cottee, McAvennie, Julian Dicks and Ray Stewart were all great to meet, have a photo with and chat about the Hammers.

I went to one of Bobby Moore's soccer schools and although I never got a photo with him, there was a photo that appeared in the Walthamstow Guardian of Bobby showing a group of us, including me, how to trap a ball.





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**In a 4-4-2 formation what would be your dream midfield quartet?**

Devonshire  
Brooking  
Bonzo  
DiCanio

**What's your thoughts on parkruns ? Pros and cons?**

I enjoy a parkrun. My Saturday routine is (was) run 1.5 miles to Raphels, do a parkrun, chat to my friends then run home. I use it as a run and rarely 'race' it unless I want to test my fitness.



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The pros are obviously the fact that it brings so many more people to the sport. People who may never have tried running without it. I guess the only real cons are if people are 'racing' it every week. I don't think you can be the best you want to be if you 'race' (rather than run) every week.

**Do you have a favourite West Ham strip?**

60's away strip. Light blue, 2 claret stripes and no sponsor.



**What and when were the circumstances of your dinner with Sir Geoff?**

**Can you tell us a bit about him? What did you discuss?**

The company I was working for (and still do) celebrated its 50th Anniversary by having its Christmas meal at West Ham's old ground at Upton Park. At the pre meal drinks we were told to sit where we wanted but the boss approached me and told me where I was to sit. I spent the next 30 minutes thinking "This will be fun, sitting with the boss discussing work all through dinner".

So I sat down, as did everyone else and I waited for the boss to make his way to the table when totally unannounced Sir Geoff Hurst approached the table, shook my hand and said "Hi, I'm Geoff Hurst". My face must have been a picture, it was a total surprise. The reason I had



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a West Ham top on was that the theme was fancy dress and with it being at West Hams ground I obviously came as a West Ham footballer! The boss knew I was a huge West Ham fan and I had been very instrumental in persuading him to get a company box at the ground - a move that secured us a massive amount of business so I guess this was my 'Thank you'.

Considering he didn't know me and I asked him so many questions, he was very attentive and gave me his full attention. I generally chatted about West Ham and the '66 World Cup. I genuinely asked him 'If England were to get to another World Cup Final, it was 2-2 and we had a penalty and the penalty taker was on a Hat Trick, would you want him to miss. He said 'Yes'. Absolutely true story (Geoff Hurst is the only player ever to score 3 goals in a World Cup Final)

My favourite memory was that as we were eating there were TV's all around the room playing the 1966 World Cup Final. Every time Geoff was about to score he would stop me mid sentence, grab my arm and say 'Hold on - watch!' and would have a huge smile as the goal went in.

And 'yes' he was convinced his second goal crossed the line!

### **How much Tippex did you use to change Forest Gate to West Ham on your birth certificate?**

Ha Ha, none at all. In fact there was only a brief moment in time you could be born in 'West Ham, London' if you were born at Forest Gate Hospital. My dad was born at the Hospital and has 'West Ham, Essex' on his birth certificate whilst just a few years after I was born anyone born there would have 'Newham, London' on the certificate due to ward changes.



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Sex	Boy
Date of Birth	Twenty fifth February, 19
Place of Birth	Registration District West Ham
	Sub-district North East

**Why did you join Ilford AC as opposed to another club ?**

Martin and Sally were very friendly when I came down and everyone was so encouraging so I never gave it a thought to join anyone else

**What is your current job and does it affect your training ?**

I work as a Roofing Estimator / Surveyor and it very definitely affects my training. I am up at 6am for work and get home about 5.30pm. This means Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays I literally come in, get changed and go out to a club training session. I'm then home about 8pm for dinner, and hours TV and bed. Fridays (in the old world) I would always be out at a concert.

By Saturday I just want to relax and go and watch the Hammers lose!

**Tell us how you became involved with Charlton Athletic Youth Team and why did that end?**

My old P.E teacher was Les Read who eventually went on to become a coach for England and managed Charlton Athletic himself for a short while. He persuaded Charltons coaches to come and have a look at me and they invited me over. I spent some great years there as a teenager but like so many before and after me I just assumed that I would be a footballer and maybe didn't concentrate on school as much as I should have done. At the end of my time there I was about 16/17 and I knew that the club were going through financial difficulties after signing Allan Simonsen from Barcelona (no less). In the pre season a letter just came through my door saying that the club had decided to make some cutbacks and I would not be required back. I remember reading the letter and crying!



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**If you had your life again and were reincarnated would you want to be BOBBY MOORE or ELVIS ?**

Oh tough one. Bobby Moore is an absolute legend but lets be honest the country and West Ham treated him awfully after he retired. He spent his last years working as a commentator for Capital Gold Sport and writing a column for the Sunday Sport. He should have been an ambassador for England and West Ham, so I would go with Elvis but look after myself a bit more

**First Single and Album you ever bought ?**

First single was 'Let there be Rock' by AC/DC  
First Album - The Specials self titled debut LP.

**Greatest Live Act you ever saw where and when and why?**

I have been to so many great concerts but one I can remember just sitting there and thinking 'Wow' were ZZ Top at Wembley Arena in October 2009.  
What a band.

**What running performance are you most proud of ?**

I haven't achieved an awful lot in running and don't have any medals but I can remember breaking the 2 Hour Half Marathon barrier at the Southend Half in 2011 and being really pleased. It took me about 8 goes to do it and it was a very hot day so I was really proud that day.

**Favourite Park Run and Why and PB ?**

Raphaels park is my favourite. I can jog there from home and have many good friends who also do it, so its a nice sociable thing also. Also its a very popular parkrun with a big bottleneck at the beginning so I can go along and not be tempted to run flat out as I normally spend the first minute stuck in the crowd. On the rare occasions I want to test my fitness I just place myself at the front and enjoy the hordes of people running past me before I even get to the lake!!

My PB is 22:54 in September 2019 at Raphaels

**Do you do any other forms of exercise regularly ?**



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I really wish I could do more exercise at home, and I always tell other runners to do so but for reasons given above I just struggle to find the time. Perhaps when I retire I can be the runner I should have been

### **Tell us a bit about how you got married at The Legendary Graceland ?**

I had been with Catherine for 3 years when we were on holiday in Memphis. I picked up a leaflet at the Ticket office which was advertising the new Wedding Chapel that was opening on the grounds of Graceland later that year. So I proposed to her at Graceland and we made plans to return the next year to get married



### **Worst Running Injury ?**

Has to be the one prior to my infamous London Marathon in 2013. The pain in the small of my back was agony. I should never have run it.

**You take lot of photos nowadays at races with an actual camera as opposed to a Smartphone- is photography something you are interested in ?**





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Definitely. My dream job would be a concert or a sports photographer. I always want to capture the best image possible at any time. As good as smartphone cameras are, they can't zoom properly without pixelating and they definitely can't capture 'movement' as good as a proper camera.

They say the best camera is the one you have in your pocket but I can never understand, for example, people who spend thousands on a holiday and take all their photos with a smartphone!!

**You have a very large furry cat called Johnny - Why did you give him that name ?**

He was a rescue cat so we kept the name he was given

**Post COVID What are your own Club ambitions and do you intend to be running for the rest of your life (Injury permitting) ?**

My ambitions are to keep healthy and fit and just be the best I can be.

We have so many great vets at the club - I would love to still be running and enjoying it as long as I can.. I see my role at the club as more of a coach and training partner and I plan to keep that up as long as there are people who want my help and company.

**Who is your greatest running rival in and out of the club?**

At the club Satha joined about the same time as me and I guess when we are both in form we are looking to get in front of the other. More often than not it's Satha who has the edge as like any runner who wants to be his best when he has a plan he sticks to it whilst I'm more than happy helping others with their plans - but it's always a good feeling to beat him (sorry Satha!).

Out of the club I often find myself trying to get ahead of Gary Cardnell or Iam Cummins (both from Dagenham)

**What is your most memorable West Ham United Performance ? And what do you think of The London Stadium as opposed to The Boleyn Ground ?**

I will never forget the last ever game at the Boleyn. My dad started taking me when I was 5 and in 1987 I got my first ever season ticket, which i have had ever since. To be there for the final ever match, and to beat Manchester United will stay with me forever. The raw emotion and passion that night was incredible.



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At the very end of the evening, after some live music, player interviews on the pitch and fireworks they played a short video of what was made to look like Bobby Moore looking out at the stadium for a final time, walking down the tunnel and turning out the lights on the stadium for the final time – At that moment all the lights in the stadium did indeed go out. Just looking up the video again brought tears to my eyes.

Watch here :- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUd3Ptuaire>

The London Stadium is a great stadium, and I do understand that to progress as a team we needed a ground with a 50-60k capacity. I just wish we could have developed the old Boleyn ground though. It was such a tight, intimidating ground for away teams and fans and we have never replicated that atmosphere in the new ground.

### **Are you going to give The London Marathon another go ?**

Couldn't put myself through that again. I felt so low after the last one. I'd love to add the sub 4 hour marathon to my tick list but if after months of training it never happened I think Catherine would move into the shed.

### **Why do you love London and the East End so much and did you ever live anywhere else?**

I love that spirit of togetherness we have in the East End. It's well documented that Hitler's tactic of bombing the East End was that he knew that if he broke our spirit then England would fall. Yet people like my grandparents just got on with it. There's a fantastic photo of a milkman climbing over rubble from a night's bombing to deliver the milk. I also like the fact that if you live in London you are considered a Londoner no matter how long you've been here, or what you look like. I lived in Colchester for 2 years for work reasons and was always 'Billy from London'. I never ever felt that I fitted in.

I think the East End's character is perfectly summed up with West Ham football club's support. In our 125 year history we have only ever been really average for most of it (apart from 3 FA Cups, A European Cup Winners Cup, and the World Cup in 1966) but our fans are the most passionate and vocal fans you will find anywhere.

### **What is your favourite Scottish Team and Why ?**

Glasgow Rangers. I hate Celtic's Anti British, pro I.R.A support. Celtic hate Rangers so it was Rangers by default really



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**and finally It's not a question it's a compliment to say WELL DONE TO YOU FOR ALL THE GREAT WORK YOU DO FOR THE CLUB - IT REALLY IS APPRECIATED BY ALL MEMBERS !**

Thank you very much - I really enjoy it.