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The Belgravian is the official newsletter of Belgrave Harriers and may be downloaded from the Club's website at [www.belgraveharriers.com](http://www.belgraveharriers.com). Contributors in this issue: Gordon Biscoe, William Cockerell, Eric Hall, Alan Mead, Pat Mead.

## Brian Pritchard – President of Belgrave Harriers 2005-6



**B**rian joined Belgrave on the 5th September 1942 at the age of 4! He was signed up by his enthusiastic father, who also had two brothers running for the Club. Brian was obviously expected to run and compete, which he did as a young boy, but after not achieving much success he rebelled, as youngsters do, and somewhat faded from the scene although remaining a keen supporter. He recalls occasions standing on the Common or at the side of the roads watching races with Mavis Hall. His father being a great friend of her father Tom Morrell.

It was not until after his father had died, that Brian returned to the fold and, as his own children came along and wanted to compete, that he became more and more involved, and has remained so ever since.

Over the years Brian has had many roles within the Club. For several years he assisted Ron Wyld in looking after the youngsters, acting as team manager, organiser and transport officer all in one! Then, when Ron emigrated to Australia, he continued on his own, covering both road, track and cross country. Among some of his squad during this period were Andrew North, Mark Sinclair and John Gladwin, who claims his first run for Belgrave was with Brian.

Brian's interests also included 'Walking', attending various meetings when his daughter Jayne, who had the honour of being the first lady to join Belgrave, took up competitive walking.

On the Social side he has run numerous Socials and Discos at the Hall, organised 'Surrey Suppers' for Surrey County AA at the Hall, assisted Bill Couzens in organising the Dinner Dance (including the Centenary Year), and on several occasions travelled around with Bill vetting various Bands they thought might be appropriate to book.

He has been a great supporter the Club at all levels of competition, attending not only National, Area and County events on the Road and Country as well as British League Meetings but also Club events at Battersea Park and Wimbledon Common, etc. For many years he has been only too willing to respond to the call for officials or course markers, helping out in all weathers.

Some three years ago he took over the organisation of the annual Club dinner dance, and in spite of a spell in hospital involving major surgery, he has revitalised it to the continuing popular event that it is today.

Thus, with some 63 years of Club service and a wealth of experience behind him, Brian can be described as a true Belgravian. We look forward to his year as President.

*Gordon Biscoe*

... and a few lines from Brian ...

... Just to say how honoured and privileged I am to be asked to be your President for the coming year. My father Thomas Pritchard joined the Club in the 1930's and in later years became a Life Member of Belgrave so I am especially pleased to carry on the tradition. I have a daughter, two sons, a granddaughter and a grandson Thomas who are also members of Belgrave. Thomas is a fourth generation Belgravian which is especially pleasing as our family name will hopefully carry on in the Club for many years to come.

During my years in Belgrave I have made some wonderful friendships that have endured over the decades and I can honestly say that not being very gifted as a runner has never been a hindrance as I have always been made to feel at home in this great Club of ours.

In closing I would just like to wish everybody the very best for the coming year and will try to get to see as many of you as I can while I am President.

Yours

*Brian Pritchard*

PS A plug for the club Dinner & Dance at Reigate Manor Hotel on the 26th November 2005. It would be nice to see as many of you there as possible as I am sure you will have a good evening. Guest speaker this year will be David Bedford. If you need tickets please phone me on 01737 858344.

## Hon Secretary's Report to AGM 2005

It has been quite a bittersweet year for our club with notable success mixed with sadness and some painful defeats. However, although club athletics in this country is at an uncertain crossroads, Belgravians can trust that their club is in robust health and that we can look to the future with confidence and optimism. The securing of London's Olympic bid has boosted our profile, and people often look to us first when taking up athletics and joining a club. Our reputation is greater than ever, and stretches far. When a Polish athlete, his sister and father vacationed in London last week, my house was, naturally, their first port of call. Could he do some high jumps for Belgrave on his visit to England? Season over, I had to dash his dreams but it was still a telling moment.

We were saddened by the death of Arthur Penstone this year whose most notable contribution to club life was the care and attention he devoted to Belgrave Hall. For about 50 years Arthur's expertise as an electrician and handyman ensured the Hall remained in good condition. The club was also devastated to learn of the death of our friend, committee member, past-president and British League manager, John Jeffery. John worked tirelessly for the club in so many areas and we owe a lot of our recent success, prestige and reputation to him. We all miss him dearly, none more so than Bill Laws, John's great friend and co-British League manager. Bill has now managed the team for a stunning 25 years in which he has dragged us from the bottom of the pile to many years of national dominance. At the end of the season Bill at first spoke of possibly taking a step back. Whatever you decide Bill, I should like to thank you on behalf of all of us for a quarter of a Century of tireless work.

We set up a partnership with Sutton & District AC this year whereby, in track and field, certain Sutton athletes may now compete for Belgrave and, to a lesser extent, vice versa. We field composite Junior and Young Athletes Teams and officials of both clubs also get together to assist in the running of the meetings of either club. Belgrave Harriers used Sutton Arena for the first time for home meetings.

On the field of play, last winter was highly rewarding for the road and cross-country section of the club with our members travelling the length and breadth of the country in search of silverware and often finding it. Our men struck gold six times and came second in four other high-profile events. We own all four major road-relay titles, and regained the prestigious National 12-stage title with a team of breath-taking depth and quality. I wonder how many other clubs in the world could have troubled us on that day. Our cross-country results were solid but after the wonderful win at the National in 2004, I detect a little underperformance, and our 8th and 6th places at the Southern and National were rather a shame, but, remember, a few short years ago we would have been ecstatic with such returns. Closer to home we were happy to reclaim the South of the Thames Championship.

Our women now have almost every cog in place for an assault on titles of their own. The most important cog is imperiously in place, as in Catherine Eastham the women boast a team manager every bit as inspirational, thorough and determined as what the men enjoy. Some brief highlights include placing second at the Southern six-stage relay, defending their title at the Reigate Priory relay and a terrific 12th place at the National cross. They almost won the Surrey cross-country League but were just pipped in a dramatic final race by Ranelagh.

In track and field our women, expertly guided by Cynthia James and Bob Bridges, were undefeated in division 4 of the UK League, and march to division 3 from where we hope again to win promotion.

Our male track and field team finally had to relinquish our British League title after a terrific battle with Woodford Green. Nine titles in a row was not to be, but all credit to Woodford who have been nipping at our heels for several seasons now and fully deserved their win. We appeared to be particularly fallible in the sprinting events this year which is unusual for us, but our luck was definitely out with a whole group of the speedsters out of form, injured or competing elsewhere at the same time. In the Jubilee Cup we had one of those really dire days that sneak up uninvited every few years and failed to qualify for the final, as Rugby pipped us by two points.

It has been a quiet year for our walkers as they linger near the bottom of the slope with an aim to get back up again. We are still turning out teams for the local events and competing regularly. Unfortunately, we have no class performers these days, apart from our 2nd claim member Estle Viljoen who spent much of last year off injured but who has now regained form to recently take 2nd place in the National 20kms. Our second lady walker, Maureen Noel completed the London Marathon (running) and recently won the National 50kms. Paul King our long distance performer completed the Colchester 100 last year and more recently the Kings Lynn 100 and was 4th in this year's National 50kms. The icon that is Carl Lawton finished more races than anyone else in the country last year.

Our juniors are often the victim of their own success with our best athletes on international duty during league matches. Consequently the junior men were relegated from the Southern premier division and join the Brent League. However, our junior girls won the Brent League and new rules dictate our boys and girls will now perform as a joint team in that league next summer. This is all much more convenient and suits us well.

In my list of outstanding individual athletes over the past year, special mentions should go to the following: Mark Miles placed a tremendous 3rd in the National cross; Harry Aikines-Ayretey won both the 100 and 200-metres at the World Youth Games in Marrakesh; Wade Bennett-Jackson was 2nd in the 100-metres at the Norwich Union Grand Prix under-20 race; and Chris Gearing continues to show great promise in the shot and recently won the UK Challenge Final to go with his win at the Inter-counties Under-20 event. Javelin thrower Goldie Sayers placed twelfth in the World Championships and fourth in the World Student Games; while Birhan Dagne, our national cross-country champion from 2004 continues to shine in road races all over the country. Finally, and most excitingly, in Tim Benjamin we could have the next big thing in British athletics. After placing 5th at the World Championships, Tim has just lowered our club 400-metre record to 44:56 in Monaco, to put him within a couple of tenths of Iwan Thomas's British record, which Roger Black feels Tim will one day smash.

In closing, our merry band of committee members and officials are working as hard as ever to ensure the club runs smoothly and that we continue to offer our members terrific value. All of our officials give up their time for free of course and deserve our humble gratitude: it is sobering to compare us for instance with the golf club I play at, which spent £323,000 on administration expenses last year. No such luxury for us, but if there's ever anything you'd like to know about how you can assist or volunteer with the running of the club, don't hesitate to let us know. The Belgrave story is now 118 years old and there's no reason why the club can't celebrate its 125th, 150th and 200th anniversaries as one of the great organizations in British sport. Thank you.

*William Cockerell, General Secretary, September 2005*



Above: Stephen Sharp (stage 6), Phil Wicks (2), Jonathan Blackledge (5), Spencer Barden (4), Alaster Stewart (1) and Tim Watson (3) receive the Ian Logan Trophy – Belgrave’s fourth year of being top of the pile at Rushmoor Arena. Only Stephen and Jonathan remained in the squad from 2004’s winning line-up.

## Road & Country

Aldershot Road Relays - SEAA 6 Stage Championship, Rushmoor Arena, 24 September 2005.

### Bels rampant at Rushmoor – a fourth successive win

We’ve had some thrills around the circuit at Rushmoor Arena in the past few years but this race was anticipated with more than the normal frisson of excitement.

First of all, only two of last year’s winning team were in the ‘A’ six – Jonathan Blackledge and Stephen Sharp. A run of colds, varying degrees of Achilles tendon problems, a holiday in Mexico and an alternate race had taken out a famous five that might have made the cut – Kevin Nash, Adam Zawadzki, Mark Miles, David Anderson and Hassan Raidi. For sixth man much thought was given to the choice between Paul Freary (an amazing run of times around Rushmoor and fit again after a year out with various injuries) and Al Stewart (another with a long period out but now running well and with an ok run at Bishop Auckland under his belt). Just 40 hours before the race Al got the nod but both were to run on the opening leg. Throw in the fact that 19-year old super-talent Shukri Omar was going to start the ‘C’s and we had a first stage battle to savour.

Then there was the possibility that a Belgrave win could set an outright record for consecutive victories – Southampton City won three times ’93-’95 with our own hat trick being ’02-’04; but that victory was by no means assured as our own camp felt that Newham & Essex Beagles might have the edge. Wells City Harriers are also on the rise while Harrow were rumoured to have a strong outfit.

Finally, ‘B’ teams would be eligible for the National race for the first time ever – if they could place in the top 20 here on the Army training grounds.

#### Stage 1

The starter’s gun sent eighty-seven bodies on their way on the stroke of 2:30pm. Each stage of 6k is made up of two laps and as the first circuit was completed Hennessy of Wells City Harriers and Chinanhua of Poole had gained about 30 metres on the pack where sparks were flying as Al Stewart marginally led from Paul Freary with Shukri almost alongside – we had three men in the leading seven tearing lumps out of each other. Al imperceptibly began to move away going into the second lap with “Shugs” – not cleared to run in our scoring teams until 1st November – hanging on to him. Al Stewart was a revelation. He’d been picked on the basis of certainly being able to give us an 18:30 but as the second lap unwound he went from strength to strength. He caught the Poole runner near the gravel slope and by 500 metres to go was very close to the lead. Simons of Cornwall AC had been tracking our man, however, and sprinted past near the end to narrowly take the stage while Al caught the Wells City man to go into second. Paul Freary suffered on that second lap but has now made a huge stride back to fitness while Shukri gave the ‘C’s an awesome start. ‘A’s 2nd, ‘C’s 6th and ‘B’s 13th!

#### Stage 2

It wasn’t supposed to be like this! A nice 10th place would have given Phil Wicks some men to chase in his quest for something around an 18:15 clocking; but here he was taking over just a second down on leaders Cornwall AC with Wells City a further second behind him. A quick shuffle and it was Wells from Belgrave as the Cornish team slipped back (Dave Buzza had already led his veterans’ team to silver medals) and Morris of Wells City took up the pace. Young Phil was bidding his time though and soon eased ahead and away. Gradually stretching the gap he ended up well inside his target time and our lead was just under half a minute. Seventeen year-old Kris Gauson picked off several men for the ‘B’s to move into 10th – but they were still behind the non-scoring ‘C’s, holding on to 7th through Andrew Swearman.

#### Stage 3

Spare a thought here for Tim Weeks in the 'C's – two weeks without running due to illness and here he was right near the front end of the field. An elite triathlete until a bad crash in Australia while training on his bike left him with a shattered leg, Tim has set himself the task of working his way into our top teams. Seven men including the Skipper came past and our team order was made sensible – 'B's 9th, 'C's 14th and 'A's 1st and storming away thanks to Tim Watson. Our lead was now 45 seconds over Wells City with Kent AC up to 3rd through Jermain Mays.

#### Stage 4

Mo' Farah was wheeled out now for Newham & Essex Beagles and soon he was rocketing through the field on his way to a 17:23 – the day's fastest but some way behind the incredible course record of 17:07 by Brighton's Andy Bristow from 1989. The Beagles came up ten places but there was no change at the front as Spencer Barden equalled his best ever time for the circuit – 17:54. Twenty-three year old Peter Willis made his first appearance in a Belgrave team – the 'C's – and exactly equalled the time set by Knut Hegvold in the 'B's; more young blood for the cross-country season ahead.

#### Stage 5

Jonathan Blackledge was a little disappointed with his time on stage five but with the race coming earlier this year he was only just out of his end-of-season break. Nevertheless our lead now reached its maximum – we had gone away on every stage and now were 1:28 to the good. Once again our 'B' and 'C' runners clocked identical times – Lee Greatorex and Joachim Wolf ensuring now that we were going to achieve all that we had set out to do.

#### Stage 6

... And so to the finish, with a team time half a minute better than our best from 2003. Stephen Sharp had been itching for another sub-18 run but with no one to chase he had to do no more than go through the motions. Rumour has it that he is now employing Securicor to look after his home as he has 16 SEAA and AAA team "golds" plus 2 "silvers" in his trophy cabinet!

Also on the last leg, John Clarke had handed his mobile phone to the team manager with the words, "my wife's about to give birth in 8 minutes time – could you answer any calls while I'm out there." As he cruised through the first of his laps we were able to let our 'B' anchor man know that there was no news from the maternity ward – dedicated men these Belgravians. Tenth place for the 'B's gave us great pleasure as we now had two teams qualified for Sutton Coldfield – and when Jason Webb closed in the 'C's, also inside the top 20 and only 17 seconds slower than our fastest previous 'B' team, we completed what Paul Freary later called, "an epic day".

1 Belgrave H 'A' 1:49:18; 2 Wells City H 1:50:34; 3 Aldershot F&D AC 1:51:26; 4 Bedford & County AC 1:51:44; 5 Harrow AC 1:52:41; 6 Newham & Essex Beagles 1:52:47; ... 10 Belgrave H 'B' 1:55:48; 16 Belgrave H 'C' 1:57:31; 87 teams started, 69 finished.

A – A Stewart (2) 18:09; P Wicks (1) 18:09; T Watson (1) 18:24; S Barden (1) 17:54; J Blackledge (1) 18:27; S Sharp (1) 18:15.

B – P Freary (13) 18:35\*; K Gauson (10) 19:06\*; W Cockerell (9) 19:00; K Hegvold (10) 19:34; L Greatorex (11) 19:48; J Clarke (10) 19:45.

\* These are the official times – but two independent unofficial timekeepers had 18:42 and 18:59 and Paul Freary's own watch had 18:40 – so for statistical purposes we'll take the unofficial times.

C – S Omar (6) 18:25; A Swearman (7) 19:03; T Weeks (14) 20:10; P Willis (16) 19:34; J Wolf (14) 19:48; J Webb (16) 20:31.

Others – R Poulter (Hillingdon) 22:25. R Alsop (Herne Hill M40) 19:43.

Fastest: 1 M Farah (Newham & EB) 17:23; 2 K Cullen (Highgate) 17:42; 3 A Bowden (Harrow) 17:49; 4 S Barden (Belgrave) 17:54; 5 F Tickner (Wells City) 17:58; 6 P Tulba (Basingstoke & MH) 18:02; =12 A Stewart (Belgrave) and P Wicks (Belgrave) 18:09; 17 S Sharp (Belgrave) 18:15. A MacLean (Team Southampton) 17:35 and D Simons (Cornwall) 18:08 but in incomplete teams.

Aldershot Road Relays - SEAA Women's 4 Stage Championships, Rushmoor Arena, 25 September 2005.

### Tilly keeps the show on the road

A late withdrawal meant that only three women were available for this race – and in spite of many calls to likely candidates it proved impossible to make up a foursome. Rather than call things off, Tilly Heaton vowed that she would run twice to keep the show on the road. What a heroine!

Back in the late '80s and early '90s our men's team usually failed to turn out a team and it wasn't until we insisted on making an effort – even turning up with half a squad – that the wheel began to turn in our favour.

Tilly battled round a first effort for 19th before unleashing Heidi Cayzer who was intent on making a showing to grab a National team place. She stormed the slopes and bends and was delighted to move up four places for a time just a few ticks slower than Tilly's. Juliette Clarke continued the drive forward with our fastest run and a position of 9th before we ran out of runners was very creditable. And of course Tilly was going to make sure that we continued to the finish. She looked pretty tired setting out for her second run but by the time she was running in to the finish there was a spring in her stride and a second run under 15 minutes was a real feat.

1 Windsor SE&H 54:10; 2 Woodford Green wEL 54:54; 3 Winchester & DAC 55:06; 4 Aldershot F&DAC 55:37; 5 Thames H&H 55:54; 6 Shaftesbury Barnet H 56:00; 13 Belgrave H 58:08; 58 teams started, 49 finished.

M Heaton (19) 14:27; H Cayzer (15) 14:30; J Clark (9) 14:16; M Heaton (15) 14:55.

Fastest: S O'Sullivan (Thames H&H) 12:28; 2 L Elliott (Winchester & DAC) 12:39; 3 L Yelling (Bedford & CAC) 12:49.

Below. Captain Juliette Clarke was our fastest at Rushmoor Arena, moving the team from 15th into the top ten.



Women's Surrey CC League Division One, Wimbledon Common, 8 October 2005.

## It's Ranelagh - Belgrave again

Already the Women's Surrey League looks as if it will be a two horse race as Ranelagh and Belgrave both closed in their teams within a whisker of each other - but the former having the advantage of two runners right up in the frame. The Petersham based club, league winners last winter, will be difficult to beat but will have to be on top form in every match to avoid letting in the Belles whose strength in depth continues to grow.

Sarah Murphy was best of the Belles on this 6km course with the ever present Tilly Heaton not far behind and newcomer to our cross country teams Heidi Cayzer showing what an asset she is to the squad. Louise Cooper broke all records for cutting it fine, having got lost but eventually arriving a mere 90 seconds before the start.

Senior Women. 1 E Nelson (Epsom & Ewell) 21:43; 2 J Ronaldson (Ranelagh H) 22:31; 3 M Synott-Wells (Ranelagh H) 22:38; 8 S Murphy 22:57; 11 M Heaton 23:25; 14 H Cayzer 23:43; 21 J Clark W40 24:17; 28 H Smethurst W40 24:48; 44 A England 25:28; 59 S Stracey 26:33; 66 C Foster 26:48; 71 L Cooper 27:03; 76 S Gailey 27:17; 84 C Eastham 27:31.

Teams: 1 Ranelagh H 'A' 63; 2 Belgrave H 'A' 75; 3 Wimbledon Windmilers 114; 4 Thames H&H 134; 5 Woking AC 163; 6 South London H 164; 11 Belgrave H 'B' 269; 29 Belgrave H 'C' 703.

Under 13. 1 E Gorecha (Dorking MV) 11:28; 3 M Evans 11:48.

"Sweatshop" Men's Surrey CC League Division One, Brockwell Park, 8 October 2005.

## Herne Hill break the stranglehold

As has become traditional, the cross-country season opened over the rolling Brockwell Park greensward as the eight clubs contesting the "Sweatshop" League Division One came together for the initial fixture. Aldershot, Farnham & District AC and Boxhill Racers have both dropped out of the League but runners from each of these clubs were still present, wearing unfamiliar vests and running as second-claimers for other outfits; and with Kent AC's talented Jermain Mays lining up with the South London men, the standard was going to be as high as ever.

The Belles didn't have their normal strong line-up for this opener but there were plenty of bodies - and plenty of interest as well. Stephen Sharp, in the middle of his heaviest ever mileage, was experimenting by going into the race with no tapering down at all, Phil Wicks was tackling his first Surrey League race and intending to give a good account of himself, while the ingenuous Skipper invited the Thames Team Manager to predict a finishing position for him - and was then a little miffed to be told it would be in the "twenties".

However, it was none of these heading the field as the runners streamed over the first hill although it was a figure in a Belgrave vest - veteran Peter Fallenius, training hard for a 2:20 marathon. Soon the normal suspects took over at the front but Peter hung in there throughout the rest of the race and we were pleased with his sixth-scorer's position.

Five men had broken clear towards the end of the opening lap. Our own Phil and Stephen were taking their share at the front with Phil Tedd and John McFarlane leading the Thames challenge and Jermain Mays loping along beside them. Heading out again, though, it was Phil Wicks pushing along at the front with Stephen a few paces back and then perhaps five metres between him, Mays and then the Thames men. Phil knew he'd have to break away well before the finish if he was going to win this race but while the white-vested Hare & Hounds men did fall back, and Jermain Mays quite obviously did not like the way the hills were being tackled, Stephen seemed comfortable with every push.



"Sweatshop" Surrey CC League Race 1 at Brockwell Park, and Phil Wicks (9) and Stephen Sharp (1) slug it out at the front of the field. Photo by Steve Wicks

With a mile or so to go it was Stephen now forcing the pace along, with the elastic between the two Belgravians and Mays stretching almost to breaking point before the next downhill section allowed the South London man to reel them back again. A quarter of a mile out with just a flat section and then the rise to the finish to contend with, Mays began to sense that the race was his. He closed on Stephen with Phil now dropping back as the pace increased even more and then, at the final turn, let loose with all he'd got - and it was just enough. A great race.

Herne Hill Harriers, in the words of their team manager, had seen a huge number of their men "come out of the woodwork" for the race and they comfortably took the team race, breaking the normal Thames/Belgrave stranglehold. The Skipper managed to slot into a position he hadn't filled before - 13th - to confound the predictions and wily Knut Hegvold paced his race perfectly to get up to 20th, ahead of a disappointed Peter Willis who'd had the better of Knut on the roads of Rushmoor Arena.

In the youngsters' race we welcomed Joseph Taylor-Holland as he tackled his first ever cross-country race. He enjoyed himself, overtaking opposing runners to the very end, and we look forward to seeing him at the following matches.

Senior Men. 1 J Mays (South London H) 23:06; 2 S Sharp 23:08; 3 P Wicks 23:15; 13 W Cockerell 24:15; 20 K Hegvold M40 24:53; 36 P Willis 25:34; 39 P Fallenius M40 25:43; 44 J Charles 25:51; 49 M Humphrey 26:15; 52 J Webb 26:26; 57 T Weeks n/s 26:50; 61 E Lyne 26:58; 71 W Lynch 27:15; 74 J Galley M40 27:22; 89 T Watt 28:05; 93 M Whiting 28:23; 102 A Barden M40 28:55; 112 M Taylor M40 30:02; 128 J Stevenson 32:08; 133 L Rehn 34:21; 140 finished; H Corbett M40 dnf.

Teams: 1 Herne Hill H 181; 2 Thames H&H 209; 3 Belgrave H 296; 4 South London H 383; 5 Guildford & Godalming AC 498; 6 Reigate Priory AC 519; 7 Kingston & Poly H 539; 8 Walton AC 615.

Under 13. 1 J Puttock (Guildford & Godalming) 13:49; 7 J Taylor-Holland 15:16; 20 finished.

It was a busy day on the roads, the day after the cross-country league races. Those up early in Kingston were able to witness a 1-2 from Phil Wicks and Tim Weeks over the 8.2 miles course with Phil breaking the course record. In the 16 mile event, 5th woman was Heidi Cayzer and 4th man was Craig McMillan.

Meanwhile, down at Portsmouth in the Great South Run, Kassa Tadesse had returned to the UK from a period of training in Switzerland to place 12th in this 10 miler in 49:10. Kassa was disappointed with his time, having run an amazing 28:37 for 10k two weeks earlier. Jonathan Blackledge was 24th in the Portsmouth race with 50:52 (nearly two minutes removed from his previous best for the distance) and Tim Watson was 27th in 51:19. Birhan Dagne placed 5th in the women's event - 55:50.

Another who had been in league action the previous day – Veteran Peter Fallenius ran to second in the Dulwich Charity Runners 10k with 33:27.

## *Skipper's Corner*

Aficionados of our website column *Skipper's Corner* will be delighted to learn that we intend to unleash edited excerpts of Skip's unique literary offerings to those unsuspecting members who only receive their club news via *The Belgravian*. We will thus also record life as a Belgrave runner in 'noughties for all time.

### **September 25, 2005 - Congrats to Southern 6-stagers**

Many congratulations to our Southern 6-stage team, who, after several weeks of selection headaches and dropouts, all came good on the day. Four years ago we briefly threatened to take the lead at this race, before spluttering to the bronze. Grrr, would we ever win one of the big road relays? Here's our sequence of results since: 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1. Herne Hill and South London have defeated us at the Surreys; Morpeth at Mansfield; and of course that body-blow by Aldershot at the National 12. But there's no denying that Wells hit us hard at Rushmoor Arena and it wasn't until deep into leg 5 that we finally felt safe. I actually owe a lot of my running heritage to Wells. My ex-step-uncle is their member of parliament, and it was at his Scottish hunting lodge in the early 1980s that I first started to sample the delights of a morning run before breakfast. Wells put out a very fine team in the SEAA relay and should now be recognized as one of the big-hitters in the South.

### **Baby-b's have their chance ...**

So the 'Baby-b's' have their chance to sample the delights of the National 6-stage... [Qualifying B Teams are now allowed to compete in the National.] I've been trying all century to run in this event but the manager has always stood firm – bless him! But I now greatly look forward to sampling this dramatic race with its unique atmosphere over that oh-so-challenging course.

We shall only maintain our winning streak by pulling together and building on the tremendous team spirit so evident at Rushmoor Arena. Such is the nature of this tough, unpredictable sport that our set-up is always fragile. Lose a couple of big guns and we're vulnerable to anyone, but we go to Sutton on October 22 to seek five wins in a row. It's going to be a huge challenge and lady luck must remain a loyal companion.

### **October 10, 2005 - The League remains alive**

Our local boys battled valiantly at Brockwell Park although we were two or three bodies shy of a really solid team. I do hope our members will rally in even greater numbers to support the fixtures in deepest Surrey countryside, on

November 19 and January 16, to maintain our interest in the league. An extra-special thank you to Stephen and Phil at the *Sharp* end for sprinkling our challenge with their unique brand of stardust. Knut Hegvold, meanwhile, continues to defy the aging process. In 2001 he turned 40 and promptly ran a cracking race, and now four years on he has run five seconds quicker – an inspiration to us all.

The activity of 'Bels-spotting' at the race was something of a psychedelic, haunting experience. Here they were. There they weren't. Big Belgrave names of yesteryear in action, but in Dennis the Menace uniforms. Sniff. But such is the cut-and-thrust world of top level sport... Speaking of Herne Hill – what an unpredictable bunch they are. Last year I 'bigged-them-up' to set the Surrey League alight but they barely fizzed. This year I ignored them in my preview only for them to put out something of a dream team. Half-a-dozen runners of immaculate pedigree, and 34 in total. Whew – thank goodness they weren't all in top fettle. As it is the league remains alive.

I had a somewhat humbling moment on the way to the race. Feeling happy to be embarking on my eighth Belgrave cross-country season and 27th Surrey league race, I asked my fellow passenger if he knew how many Surrey League races he had done. "Yep. 108." Yowzer! One-hundred-and-eight. 27 years worth... 540-miles of tasty galloping in this riveting little league. Well I guess I can say I'm a quarter of the way to Robin Dixon's record (of Croydon, and latterly Thames). You're all invited for chocolate cake and champagne at Coulsdon, February 6, 2027, to celebrate me passing Robin's tally. Robin will probably run that day, though, just to spite me.

### **It's seat belts on for the National Six-stage ...**

So, it's seat-belts on for the National Six-stage relay at Sutton Park on October 22nd. This is shaping up to be one of the most gripping, dazzling, gut-wrenching lung-busters that our famous club has ever seen. My 'skip corn' column last December spoke of five Belgrave thrillers in recent years, but this could top the lot. We make no secret that we fear a handful of clubs, as we strive to select a team that can serve, volley and hit fizzing backhand winners down the line... so to speak. Bjorn Borg would indeed be a prudent selection. Why? Because he knows how to win something *five* times in a row: Wimbledon 1976-1980. The most latter victory was his toughest though, as a snarling John McEnroe almost nailed him. Who's going to snarl at us? We have an inkling. But whatever happens it's going to be an absolute cracker. My advice? Be there! - We need all the support we can get. It's going to be a roller-coaster of emotion; but most important of all, I think it's going to be fun.

*Skip*



Bill Laws, David Lucas and Alan Mead visited Greycoats School in Westminster during September. They represented Belgrave and Athletics in a Sports Roadshow encouraging children to take up active sport. Some fifteen different activities were represented at the show.

## Results Roundup

### Road & Country

#### September 2005

- 24 **A travers Carouge Run to Run 10 km, Carouge SUI.** 1 T Chengere (Chavannes-Renens) 28:11; 3 K Tadesse 28:37.
- 25 **Wimbledon Audi 10 km, West Wimbledon.** 1 R Karn (Swindon) 32:53; 2 P Fallenius M40 33:24.
- 25 **Swansea Bay 10k.** 1 P Langat (Kenya) 29:55; 4 H Raidi 31:22.
- 25 **Berlin Marathon.** Men. 1 P Maryim (Kenya) 2:07:41; 33 E McRae 2:24:51; 94 T Hadfield 2:35:49. Women. 1 M Noguchi (Japan) 2:19:12; 84 L Cooper 3:11:35; 169 O Cameron 3:22:20; 469 V Edwards 3:38:28.

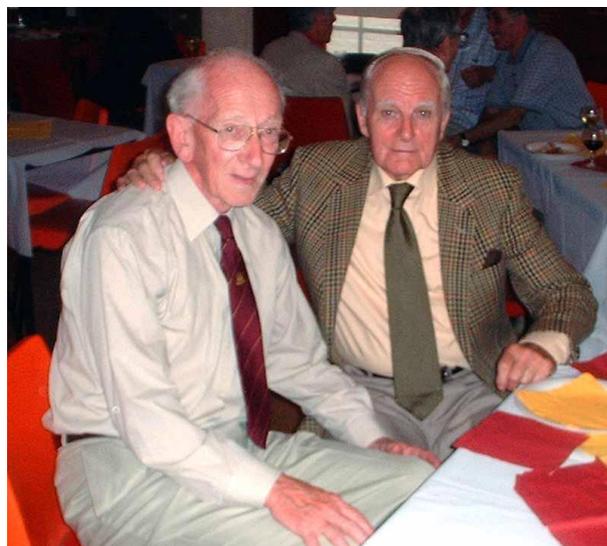
#### October 2005

- 1 **VAC 5.8 miles CC, Wimbledon.** 1 R Marriott (SLH) 32:50; 7 M Nouch M50 37:19.
- 2 **Alton Downland Challenge 10 km multi-terrain, Hants.** Women. 1 E Fogg 42:29.
- 2 **Burnley Firestation 7 miles.** 1 R Hayman (Sale HM) 36:12; 2 P Freary 38:00.
- 2 **Rainforest Foundation 10 km, Victoria Park.** 1 A Coleman (Enfield &H) 30:41; 8 J Charles 34:58.
- 2 **Bristol Half Marathon.** Women. 1 B Dagne (Belgrave) 1:12:53; 14 H Smethurst 3-W40 1:25:48; 23 V Clarke 1:26:49.
- 8 **Scottish East District 4-Stage Relay Champs., Corstophine Hill, Edinburgh.** Fastest: R Russell (Central AC) 11:13; 3 K Gauson U20 11:30; 4 D Gauson 11:33; ... P.McCloskey 12:28.
- 8 **Scottish West District 4-Stage Relay Champs., Dam Park, Ayr.** Fastest: M Pollard (Inverclyde) 12:33; ... R Montgomery 13:27.
- 9 **Great South Run 10 miles, Portsmouth.** Men. 1 J Yuda (Tanzania) 46:45; 12 K Tadesse 49:10; 24 J Blackledge 50:52; 27 T Watson 51:19. Women. 1 D Tulu (Ethiopia) 51:27; 9 B Dagne 55:50.
- 9 **Run Kingston.** Men. 8.2 miles: 1 P Wicks 41:14; 2 T Weeks 45:58. 16 miles: 4 C McMillan 1:34:53. Women. 16 miles: 5 H Cayzer 1:47:41.
- 9 **City of Liverpool 10 km.** 1 S Arusei (Kenya) 29:31; 9 A Swearman 32:11.
- 9 **Dulwich Runners Charity 10 km.** 1 R Bentley (Blackheath &B) 33:05; 2 P Fallenius M40 33:27.

### Old sweats talk track

Each year in September the outgoing President's "get together" at the Belgrave Hall gives the chance for long-term members and club officials to have a chinwag about our sport and mull over the year's activities. Actually, we say "the year's" but in the case of the two double Olympians below, we bet it is some previous year.

Eric Hall competed in Melbourne 1956 (9th 50k Walk) and Rome 1960 (10th 20k Walk) while Bill Nankeville competed in London 1948 (6th 1500m) and Helsinki 1952 (heats 1500m). Bill was also a member of Britain's 4x880, 4 x 1500m and 4 x 1 mile world record-breaking teams of the '50s. Bill hopes to be at this year's Club Dinner where he will meet up with a fellow world record breaker – David Bedford.



## From The Belgravian

### 50 Years Ago – 1955

There were a number of very significant Club events in 1955. We organised the first National event held from the Hall - the oldest walking championship over 20 miles was over the same three lap course as that was used for the Open run. It was acknowledged to have been a great success due in no small measure to the assistance from many members who turned out on the day to ensure that everything went smoothly. As a reward the walkers not only won the team title but also regained the Nijmegen Shield for the team finishing eight walkers before any other club - this started a sequence of eight wins and George Beecham was an ever present.

Colin Collis was third in the fourth Open run over the same distance and the team were placed second behind Victoria Park Harriers. In the London to Brighton relay we were 4th and six Club stage records were broken so keen was the pace set by the winners South London who were almost unbeatable at that time.

The track season was one of mixed fortunes and even in those days clashing fixtures had an effect. A success in the Vancouver Trophy at Woodford was at the expense of having a weaker team in the Gordon Stewart Trophy at Ealing. Rail strikes during the summer added to the problems when few members had their own transport. At a Polytechnic meeting at Chiswick Denis Merrett won the Southern AAA's 220 yards hurdles an event which disappeared from athletics a few years later.

Harry Shields was elected President at the AGM and the Hon. Treasurer announced that income had exceeded expenditure for the first time in many years! This was acknowledged to be due to the London inter city match from which the Club had received a share of the gate. As our officials had played a very important part in officiating and organising the match this seemed fair recompense.

The sad news for the Club, and British athletics, was the departure for Australia of Franz Stampfl who had coached Club members since his arrival from Austria in 1937. After a desperate time during the war he finally returned to the Club and continued coaching at Battersea where his group of athletes of both sexes and all ages was well known. He is, perhaps, best known for the large part he played in Roger Bannister breaking four minutes for the mile.

On July 1st the London to Brighton and back walk gave the Club the opportunity to recruit a man destined to have a great effect on our teams over the next five or so years. The race started at Croydon and headed into London where the field made an about turn at Big Ben and headed back towards Brighton. While waiting for the walkers to pass our group of supporters were approached by a chap who expressed an interest in taking up the sport. In support of his application he told of his prowess over the Brighton road in the recently held Stock Exchange walk. He was instantly snapped up and in his first two mile Club event he recorded a time of 17m 10s - not earth shattering. Eighteen months later he placed 5th in the Olympic 20kms walk in Melbourne and was awarded the Tommy Green trophy for the outstanding achievement by a Belgravian for the year. Stan Vickers (for it was he) went on to break the long standing British record for the two mile walk in 1960 with a time of 13m 02.2s and followed that with a bronze medal in the Rome Olympics.

As Stan had failed to get a reply from another Club he had approached, the moral has to be get in first and ask questions later!