



News Release

26th February 2017

SPARTAN CHAMPIONS NIGHT

Andrew is SOTY * Baldock Beast * Brian Wins

A huge number of Fairlands Valley Spartans gathered in the Cromwell Hotel, Old Stevenage on Friday for the club's annual presentation evening.

They celebrated some highlights from the year. 2016 was a fantastic year for the club including everyone who took part in the cross country races where record numbers took part. The Men's A Team won bronze in the county championships and the overall series, plus there were individual victories for Natalie Lawrence and Craig Halsey.

In the Hertfordshire Championships the Spartans enjoyed more success including

- Natalie winning silver in the county 10 mile champs with the women's team finishing third overall.
- Brian White finished second in the men's vet 60 10K along with a gold medal in the Hertfordshire half marathon.
- Jim Brown took bronze in the road 10K plus golds in the 1500, 5,000 and 10,000 metres on the track.
- Plus numerous other successes in the county track and field champs
- Craig enjoyed more success in the county 5K and more medals in the county 10K at Standalone.

The Spartans also enjoyed national and international success.

- Iris Hornsey collecting golds and silver for fun at the British masters champs.
- Grant Ramsay winning the British masters marathon.
- Iris along with Dave David Bowker and Tessa Stephenson amongst others smashing it in the masters indoor champs.

- **Monica Brown winning gold in the British masters indoor pentathlon and becoming the new British masters pentathlon champion in June, whilst being ranked in the top 5 in Europe. That led to the first award of the evening. The outstanding achievement award went to MONICA BROWN.**

Fantastic individual performances by Monica also boosted the team performances in the 2016 EMAC (Eastern Masters) Competition, formerly known as EVAC. This change in name certainly didn't stop the mighty Spartans.

The amazing Women's team topped the South West division and at the final put in a not too shabby performance to finish an extremely close second missing Gold by a tiny little 0.5 of a point.

In the Mid Week League it was fantastic to see so many new Spartans trying out 10K for the very first time. Huge congratulations to Natalie Lawrence who was first in the senior women category and Simon Jackson who won the men veterans 40 plus, with Grant a close second.

Again in 2016 the club hosted some amazing events including the home Mid Week League race hosted in June, the Fairlands Valley Challenge off road race, the 3K Relays in the Park and the Stevenage Half Marathon..

The Spartans also hosted the Stevenage Sport Relief Mile back in March. A major highlight during this event was down to a certain Spartan who thought he would do a little bit to support the charity by running a just few laps around Ridlins. The few laps were actually 402.2, which is 100 miles and the Spartan of course was John Nelms. His exploits over 21.5 hours in which he completed the distance were awe inspiring and drew support from 100+ Spartans throughout the whole 22 hours, with most joining John on the track. This led to JOHN NELMS also receiving an Outstanding Achievement Award.

The captains' awards went to THOMAS SAUKA and TODD GRAY, joint male winners, and CLAIRE COX who raced in every Cross Country and Mid-Week League fixture of the season.

In the Club Championships awards, which were collated by Paul Holgate, the winners were:

Male short – Open: 3rd Steve Green (66.5%); 2nd Mike Green (69.0%); 1st Grant Ramsay (77.9%).

Male short - Age graded: 3rd David Bowker (73.6%); 2nd David Riddell (73.7%); 1st Craig Halsey (79.6%)

Male long – Open: 3rd Steffan Iestyn Ford (71.5%); 2nd Grant Ramsay (78.0%); 1st Andrew Patterson (78.7%).

Male long – Age graded: 3rd Steve Green (69.4%); 2nd Pete Smith (73.1%); 1st Craig Halsey (76.3%)

Female short – Open: 3rd Andrea Westcott (56.3%); 2nd Hazel Clark (61.3%); 1st Ann Tryssesoone (65.5%)

Female short – Age graded: 3rd Sharon Crowley (64.3%); 2nd Cathy Craig (68.4%); 1st Iris Hornsey (79.8%)

Female long – Open: 3rd Maria Thorne (47.5%); 2nd Mollie Smith (57.1%); 1st Isabel Green (61.6%)

Female long – Age graded: 3rd Sharon Crowley (56.4%); 2nd Jan Fry (61.0%); 1st Karen Ellis (61.3%)

The short distance championships were decided by the best three out of 1500 metres, 5K, five miles and 10K. The long distance by the best three out of ten miles, half marathon, twenty miles and full marathon.

By combining the short and long distance results the overall male winner was Grant Ramsay and the overall female winner Sharon Crowley.

Most improved male compared with 2015 was **KARL SHREEVE** and the most improved female **NICOLA TOUT**.

CAREN THAIN was Starter of the Year. Many Spartans first taste of running with the club was with the starter group on a Monday and Thursday before progressing to the other groups and open events.

Taking everything into account **GRANT RAMSAY** is Fairlands Valley Spartans' **CLUB CHAMPION 2016**.

The chair's award went to **JAMES KILROY** who organised the Sport Relief Mile.

Spartan of the Year

All Spartans can vote for the Spartan of the year.

This year's winner of Spartan of the Year 2016 is a man that goes quietly about his own running, always attending the club related team events, cross country and mid-week league where he regularly racks up high points for us, but being such a lovely fella also encourages and motivates everyone he sees in the stripes always with a massive smile on his face. He continues that encouragement if you are lucky enough to pass (in the opposite direction of course) Group 5+ during a training session and notably at whole club training events as well. Personally he achieved great things with his running last year, most notably taking three minutes off his half marathon PB (personal best) to an amazing 1 hour 14 minutes finish which qualified him for a Championship place at the 2017 London Marathon. The Spartan of the Year is **ANDREW PATTERSON**.

Baldock Beast

Hills and sections of cross country running were a serious challenge and made the Baldock Half Marathon the beast of an event that it is. The last four miles seemed to be straight into

a strong headwind. That wore many runners down. Nevertheless the eleven Spartans put in some good performances.

TOM SAUKA improved by 2 minutes 32 seconds on last year to finish in 1 hour 33 minutes 46 seconds for 26th overall out of the 306 finishers.

ROS INGRAM was fastest female for Fairlands in 1:52:55 while JIM BROWN was third veteran 60 plus in 1:51:12. RICHARD KENNEDY was in the top 100 with 1:42:57.

TIM ROBINSON came in with 1:53:40; CLAIRE WHITCHURCH and PAUL WHYTE crossed the line together in 1:55:00 exactly; NICOLA KENNEDY came in with 1:55:59; JENNY PAUL with 2:08:54; MARK BEASLEY 2:35:39 and CALLUM BEASLEY in 2:35:40.

Position	Name	Time	Comments
27	THOMAS SAUKA	1:33:46	2.5 min imp 9MV40
80	RICHARD KENNEDY	1:42:57	
140	JIM BROWN	1:51:12	Third MV60
149	ROS INGRAM (F)	1:52:55	9FV35
153	TIM ROBINSON	1:53:40	
161	CLAIRE WHITCHURCH (F)	1:55:00	
162	PAUL WHYTE	1:55:00	
171	NICOLA KENNEDY (F)	1:55:59	
239	JENNY PAUL (F)	2:08:54	7FV45
299	MARK BEASLEY	2:35:39	
300	CALLUM BEASLEY	2:35:40	

There were 306 finishers.

Brian Wins In Duathlon

BRIAN WHITE ran the Ashridge Duathlon which was in the estate grounds of Ashridge House. It consisted of a 10K trail race; 44K cycling and a 5K run. He won the veteran 60 plus award with a total time of 2 hours 51 minutes 23 seconds and was 21st overall.

In the shorter Sprint distance event NICOLA TOUT competed in her first duathlon. She was 28th woman (9th in F45-49 category) in 1:44:15.

Ken's Inaugural

KEN JUDE ran the Inaugural Thorpe Park Half Marathon in **1:58:34** despite an-interrupted winter training schedule.

Betteshanger

On Saturday Carol Paul ran the 100 club marathon at Betteshanger Country park just outside Deal in Kent. The marathon consisted of 12.96 laps of the cyclopark. It was a very windy day where at times it felt as if you was running on the spot. Carol completed the marathon in **4:23:41**

Meanwhile **ROGER BIGGS** did the double with marathons held on Saturday and Sunday.

Both marathons were held on the same mildly undulating course on a perfect road service usually used by cyclists. From the high part of the park, Deal and the Kent Coast are clearly visible.

The Saturday event was named the AGM Handicap, where runners set off according to the recent marathon times.

On windy days, Roger completed the first day in **4:48:50**, and the second in **5:03:32**.

Serpentine

It was bright but chilly and breezy for the monthly race round the Serpentine on Friday. Spartan **JIM BROWN** was **214th** in the popular lunch time race with **24 minutes 17 seconds**, a ten second improvement since January.

Parkrun Reports

A blustery, chilly morning in Fairlands Valley saw 17 Spartans line-up in the biggest Stevenage parkrun field of the year so far.

VERITY FISHER was first Spartan woman in 12th position in a time of 26 mins 05 seconds and secured the first and last Stevenage points competition (parkrun has scrapped the points from this date forward). CALLIE CHAPMAN was 16th in 26:31 and HAZEL SMITH 17th in 26:33. KAREN BROOM was the next Spartan woman and knocked almost two minutes off her previous best here, to go sub-30 for the first time, finishing in 28:36. SALLY PHILLIPS finished in 33:12.

First male Spartan was again JAY PAPA this week, finishing 11th in a new course PB of 20:14. BARRY OSBORNE was 18th in 21:01, with MARTIN DUDLEY 35th in 22:27. DARREN EMMERSON was fourth Spartan man in 22:33. The other club members in attendance were LEE PICKERSGILL (24:11, new course PB), TIM ROBINSON (26:28), CRAIG BACON (27:50), DANIEL SUTTON (27:52), TIM SABAN (28:37), STEVEN DOBNER (30:29), ROBERT EVANS (39:06 with his kids) and JAMES SOUTH (49:20 with family, buggy and dogs).

Elsewhere JOHN ROXBOROUGH was 37th at Milton Keynes in a new course PB of 21:40. DARYL STEVENS was at one of his usual haunts, completing the Brockenhurst parkrun in 37:40. Finally, ANDY JAY was also on the south coast, moving to within 1 run of notching the half-century of parkruns when finishing in 24:59 at Southampton.

Coming Events

Many Spartans will be enjoying a busy programme of races, social and training events over the next few weeks including cross country league. The opportunities include:

- Essex 20 and Berkhamsted Half Marathon on Sunday 5th March.
- Finchley 20 including Hertfordshire Championships on Sunday 12th March.
- Welwyn Half Marathon on Sunday 19th March.
- Sandy Ten and Wymondham 20 on Sunday 26th March.
- Serpentine 5K in Hyde Park on Friday 31st March.

- Lee Valley 10K and Half Marathon in Waltham Forest on Sunday 2nd April.
- Brighton Marathon on Sunday 9th April.
- Maidenhead Easter Ten on Friday 14th April.
- London Marathon on Sunday 23rd April.
- County 1500 Championships in Stevenage on Monday 1st May.
- Dereham 10 (ten miles) on Sunday 7th May.
- First Mid Week Road Race League match on Wednesday 10th May.
- Summer Solstice 10K at St Albans on Tuesday 16th May.
- Stirling Marathon on Sunday 21st May.
- Mid Week Road Race League in Hitchin on Wednesday 14th June.
- Herts Veteran 10K Championships at Welwyn on Sunday 25th June.
- Mob Match on Thursday 13th July.
- Fairlands Valley Relays in Stevenage on Thursday 27th July.
- Herts Senior 5K Championships at Hatfield on Wednesday 30th August.
- Herts Veteran 5K Championships at Hatfield on Wednesday 13th September.
- Herts Senior 10K Championships at Standalone on Sunday 1st October.
- Peterborough Half Marathon on Sunday 8th October.
- Stevenage Half Marathon on Sunday 22nd October.
- St Neots Half Marathon on Sunday 19th November (TBC).
- Bass Belle 10 near Royston on Sunday 26th November.

Join The Spartans

Live in or near Stevenage? Like running? Fairlands Valley Spartans is your local running club and is on the up! The club was voted the UK's Best Running Club in 2010. It now has hundreds of members and encourages participation by all. The Spartans have a varied training programme to suit those who want to run 5 kilometres through to full marathons.

The Spartans weekday training sessions are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Go along to the new sports centre at Marriotts School – a Sports College, Telford Avenue, Stevenage (SG2 8UT) at 7p.m. Up to five running groups go out on training nights – there will be one to suit you!

The Spartan Starter group starts from Marriotts at 7.30p.m. every Monday (except public holidays) and 7p.m. every Thursday.

Most long Sunday morning training sessions start 9a.m. sharp. Spartan track training sessions are held at Ridlins Athletics Track, Woodcock Road, Stevenage most Saturdays from 9.15a.m. There are events to enter every Sunday. Newcomers are very welcome – those who have not yet done very much running might prefer to start with a Thursday, Saturday or Monday session.

Try a few sessions before joining. Membership is only £37 per year which includes UKA affiliation. Concessions are available. Membership forms are available on the Spartans website www.fvspartans.org.uk Please ask if you would like a paper copy. You can also join online.

If you want to know more about the Spartans please contact Jim Brown (0793 968 7509), Andy Neatham 0777 197 5499 and 01438 816889; or Karen Palmer (07734678566) or visit their website www.fvspartans.org.uk

E N D S

More from Jim Brown (Press Officer) 0793 968 7509; Andy Neatham 0777 197 5499 and 01438 816889 or Karen Palmer (Secretary) 0773 467 8566

www.fvspartans.org.uk