

Veterans AC League 5 miles, Battersea Park 2nd Aug 22

With more tolerable temperatures than recently this, the last of the 2022 series was held on a typical, beautiful evening on a shortened road loop in Battersea Park. Numbers were low but typical and included Surrey Walking Club's current racing team with, as appears not unusual, a loss, after the Covid break, of some of our younger competitors. The team were showing good packing in consecutive positions, but the group were down the field in line with their age groups. On this occasion Chris Flint, despite catching David Hoben early on, finally had to let the 'youngster' reclaim a 20 second victory. Much more pleasing was the presence of 17-year-old Johnny Ellerton from our friendly Club, Blackheath & Bromley. Although hosted by the Veterans Club this is an open event and Johnny not only took part and improved his time but won the race with his father, a fairly newcomer to racewalking, finishing midfield. Two of our team, David and Chris, might have been slowed a little by having, only a week or so earlier take part in the 104th edition of Nijmegen Marches, which involved 3 days of 50km each day. In total four SWC members took part with Centurions Kathy Crilley and Chris Flint in uniform as members of the Metropolitan Police Walking Club team and Spanish member, Carlos Cobo Corrales and David Hoben as civilians. The massive event was started in 1906 by the Dutch military to keep their personnel fit after the introduction of motor transport and is held on the highways and byways of this province of Holland. Due to extreme heatwave conditions, the organisers wisely decided to abandon Day 1 of this event, which was unprecedented. The temperatures on the other days were more like normal July conditions, including a few hours of rain.

The entries of 42,000 or so were actually down on previous years. For the first time the event did not require an entry ballot, however the 6,000 places at the military camp were all filled as the event is one of the few organized to build bridges between civilians and the military. The spectators, which can reach one and a quarter million, were out in full force, especially on the long approach to Nijmegen city on Day 4, and the cancellations of the past two years became a distant memory.

Results:

Mixed 5 Miles:

1. J.Ellerton (B&B U17B) 47 min 8 sec; 2. S.Bishop (VAC M60) 50 min 8 sec; 3. M.Noel (Belg W55) 52 min 50 sec; 4. S.Bennett (Ilf M60) 53 min 6 sec; 5. F.Bishop (AFD W60) 54 min 6 sec; 6. M.Ellerton (B&B M45) 55 min 35 sec; 7. L.Morris (Ilf W60) 57 min 4 sec; 8. D.Hoben (Sy WC M65) 1 hr 2 min 29 sec; 9. C.Flint (Sy WC M75) 1 hr 2 min 52 sec; 10. P.Hannell (Sy WC M75) 1 hr 6 min 3 sec.