



Masters News March 2026

Races coming up

SCVAC Kent league starts on 1st May!

Information with timetable [SCVAC Kent Vets league 2026](#)

Please fill the [availability form](#).

Team managers:

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Half Marathon Season Heats Up Ahead of London -

With the London Marathon fast approaching next month, half marathons have become the race of the moment for athletes sharpening their fitness. Among those building strongly is Tonbridge AC's Dan Bradley, who has been racing and training with London firmly in his sights.

Last weekend Bradley travelled to the Dartford Half Marathon, facing some testing conditions. Persistent rain turned the already undulating course into a muddy challenge, and with it being a race he had never run before, it was always going to be a tough test.

In a dramatic finish, the race came down to a track sprint with training partner Mason Willis (SM). After 13 tough miles, just one second separated them at the line, with Bradley finishing 2nd overall in 74:31 and first V35 home some 3 minutes ahead of the next finisher. BY Diane Bradley

Paddock Wood Half Marathon - Strong Master's Performances

The ever-popular Paddock Wood Half Marathon once again produced fast times and excellent performances from Tonbridge AC runners, with several master's athletes featuring prominently.

Leading the Tonbridge contingent home was Daniel Bradley, finishing 25th in 1:10:29 his fastest half marathon for a couple of years and a timely boost

ahead of London. (With nine months until he turns 40, this race did not recognise a V35 category, so he remained as a SM.)

Close behind was Ben Shearer, who placed 27th overall and 2nd V40 in 1:10:53. At 49 years old, Ben continues to show remarkable consistency, still running sub-71 minutes and pleased with a performance that signals strong form ahead of the marathon build-up.

Tonbridge also placed well in a high-quality field, with Craig Halsey – 86th, 1:14:47 & Neil McClements – 88th, 1:14:56

On the women's side, Helen Gaunt was first V45 home in 1.18.26 followed by Lizzie Owen 3rd V45 who continued her impressive run of form, recording another personal best with 1:22:25.

Overall, it was another excellent day for Tonbridge AC, with fast times, podium placings and personal bests highlighting the club's strength across both senior and masters' ranks as many athletes build towards the London Marathon.

Full results for all Tonbridge AC finishers can be viewed here:

<https://events.sportsystems.co.uk/results/?eid=3918&rid=6158&tid=307>

With London now just weeks away, these performances suggest Tonbridge athletes are right on track for a strong spring marathon season. BY Diane Bradley





Photos courtesy of Dave Cross

Essex 20 miles

Ben Shearer, Dan & Maxine McInulty raced today in the Essex 20 miles. In my report it shows Mason Willis first Kent man home, which needs to be mentioned as Kent received a Bronze with Mason's help. I hope that makes sense?

Tough conditions at the Essex 20 Mile this morning for our TAC runners with a very windy 5-lap course putting everyone to the test!

The Kent men's team secured bronze (3 to score) 🏅 with strong performances from the TAC squad in their prep for London marathon next month:

- ♦ Mason Willis – 7th in 1:53:31 (first Kent finisher)
- ♦ Ben Shearer – 9th in 1:53:50
- ♦ Dan Bradley – 11th in 1:54:36

Barry Stephenson, Dartford Harriers, completed the Kent team finishing 16th & 2nd M40 in 1:57:24

Also selected for the Kent women's team, TAC's Maxine McInulty finished 5th FV45 in 2:23:18 as she continues her build-up towards the London Marathon next month.

Brilliant effort from everyone in some really testing conditions! By Diane Bradley



Southern 12 stage road relay Championship, Milton Keynes, Sunday 29th March 2026

One can think of all sorts of reasons why an athlete would not want to put themselves on-the-line for a road relay, whilst fully aware that they might get shown-up. Here are a few reasons why some Masters did fill the breach of younger and faster runners who were not available on March 29th.....

"it's on the way to Scotland anyway, so I can shuffle things around and help out the team en route".

"I love a relay and it's a chance for a day out and to meet some new members, whilst getting around the country".

"It's not on my marathon schedule, but if I can help the club get a team out with a hard paced, 5 miler, I'll do it".

"I haven't done a 12 stage since the 1990's and I'm sure I won't be needed as I'll be about 9th reserve, but at least if I do have to run, we will get a team out".

"I really don't want to do it but I'm officiating there anyway, and I don't like road running and I won't take my shorts, but if you really need me, I'll do it as I have to drive the minibus anyway".

And most bizarrely:

"I've never been to Milton Keynes, but it might be nice and my primary school age daughters need a day out, so I'll run".

So for one reason or another, a "Dad's army" of veterans turned up at Milton Keynes last Sunday to inspect the roundabouts, enjoy the drizzle, fight the wind and most importantly complete the 2nd TAC men's team in the Southern 12 stage relays. To my knowledge one of the quotes attributable above does not belong to a father and one is not from a Master (in the veteran sense) but why spoil a good line?

So whilst the "A team" sped round to silver medals, only just pipped by Cambridge & Coleridge, the B team battled valiantly to 32nd place. Jacek Traczynski showed his impressive Paddock Wood ½ was no fluke speeding round his 5km loop in 17.56 on leg 4. Tony Bennett ran leg 8, giving up three places in 20.07. He handed on to Ady Whitwam who was pleased with his long leg where he recovered some of the lost ground running 30.43. Ady, who is probably the only member to have won a Northern 12 stage medal, is running the London marathon in April! He handed on to another runner from the 50-54 age group, Matt Smith, who curtailed his post cross-country season break to turn out on the 10th stage running a respectable 18.54. The history teacher dispelled the cynicism of his fellow car-passengers in the

drive-up, by proving that a Taco Bell lunch really does give you enough energy for a 5km relay leg. Richard Preston, who is preparing for the Vancouver marathon with an extended spell of orienteering, bravely ran the penultimate leg, which was a long leg of 8,662 metres in 33.15. The team was completed by former Chairman, James Taylor (a master in the school-teaching sense!) , who despite spending hours in the rain officiating the relay change-over was still capable of galloping round a short leg in 18.27, gaining one place.

When I was starting secondary school, I was advised that "being selected for any team, whether the under 12 rugby C team, the tiddlywinks team or the athletics club relay team, was an honour". For me, a club is what you make of it, and I salute all those who stepped forward to run. Distance running is seen by many as an individual sport; a sport which is all about individual times and performances. However, it's possible to also have a good day out (M1 road works and rain aside), support a club and enjoy great camaraderie and chat along the way. By Anthony Bennett

Best Athletics 10k Battersea 19th March

I took the opportunity for an evening jaunt over 10k at Battersea park on Thursday 19th March. Conditions were perfect, still and cool. Battersea is so full of runners training alone or in groups that although the race was relatively small with 74 runners it felt like a busy race. Wearing a TAC vest these days is great as I received various shouts on "go on TAC" from some of the training groups.

My time of 38.57 was a little short of my target but I faltered slightly at about 7km dropping back off two athletes that were pacing me nicely, so have convinced myself there is more and will be back!

<https://mytime.kronosports.uk/results.aspx?CIId=20177&RIId=635>

By Mark Pitcairn-Knowles

Bromley Vets 5 Mile Trail

3 TAC vets took part and we all came away with a bottle of wine for wins in our age groups.

Perfect weather and conditions underfoot allowing for road shoes. Knowing the Sparrows Den sharp double hill well I have learnt to take the first bit steady and ensure I can run harder off the top. I ignored others on the hill and had the pleasure of pulling away from them after the first time up the

hill. Apart from the hill the course is flat or downhill. The second lap was like being out for a run on my own as I finished 6th in a time 1.15 quicker than last year as first M55.

Rebecca Morton was second lady overall and first W35 on her first visit to Sparrows Den. Grazia Manzotti fresh from her 3000m walk indoors the day before was 5th lady and 1st W55.

<https://results.racetimingsolutions.co.uk/results.aspx?Cid=16269&Rid=24091> By Mark Pitcairn-Knowles



Battersea VAC 5km , 31st March 2026

This is a popular Vets race and a perfect evening presented itself to start the summer series.

Nichola Evans led the way with 18.07 as she was a close 2nd female overall and 1st W40 Age graded 82.10

Mark PK immediately messed up his race plan to follow Nichola as he paced Nichola to 2km!!! However, he was rewarded with his fastest time for a couple of years and an M60 club record by the narrowest margin of 1.3 seconds , 18.23.7, for age graded 86.34%

Sasha Humphries was a little disappointed with her 21.03 as she had targeted a low 20 time. However, this was still over the 80% age grading with 80.39. Chris Potter made a return to racing after a long spell without a race and with realistic aims was pleased to push for 23.06.

I would strongly encourage other Vets to take part in this series as a good value , well organised and friendly but competitive event.

<https://bmaf.opentrack.run/en-gb/x/2026/GBR/vacmar/event/R1/1/1/>
<https://www.vetsac.org.uk/Fixtures.html> By Mark Pitcairn-Knowles

