

## Just a Stroll in the Park

It began 13 years ago - and in those days it was very innovative - a race just for ladies.

Spectrum Striders Running Club, based at Birchwood High School, had a healthy membership, but it was predominantly male and we wanted to introduce the benefits of running to the 'fairer sex' - and hopefully get a few to join the Club. We designed a new starters' training programme especially for ladies and we advertised it with posters throughout Birchwood and locally around Warrington. We also decided that it would be useful to have a goal for the new starters - and so we organised a 5000m race four months ahead - and the first 'Forest Park Ladies 5k' was born in July 1993.

With 103 entries it was a success from the start, but over 13 years it has grown in reputation and size. This year, on the 6<sup>th</sup> July, it attracted almost 200 entries from all over the Northwest. The standard is wide ranging - we still get many ladies feeling the excitement of their first race, but we also get many Club athletes, up to National level, who want to compete on a flat fast course.

No matter what their standard, they all come to enjoy the unique, friendly atmosphere and the interesting course which takes them from the park, down Birchwood Brook, behind Birchwood Boulevard and back to a great welcome as they return to the finish in Birchwood Forest Park to a great welcome and a spray of flowers each.

It is a well-loved event. Spectrum Striders still organise their beginners' scheme (but this has been so successful it has been extended to include men. This year Nicola Bird from Ellesmere Port Running Club took the winner's honours, and Spectrum Striders had 15 runners who enjoyed the event.

If you are interested in joining the Club, or joining the beginners' scheme in April 2006, please contact our Membership Secretary, Linda Owen, on 01925 267306 (e-mail [lp.owen@lineone.net](mailto:lp.owen@lineone.net)) or visit our website <http://www.spectrumstriders.org.uk/> and maybe next July you too could enjoy a stroll in the park!

Andy Garnett  
Club Secretary  
Spectrum Striders Running Club