

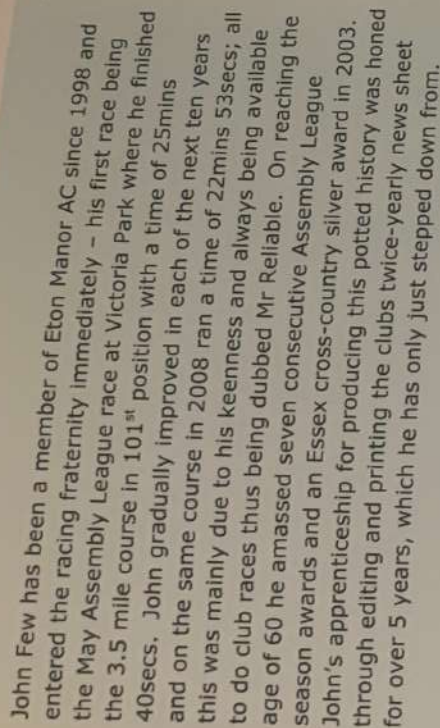
ETON MANOR AC

1913 - 2013

A history of the athletics club
on its 100th anniversary



by John Few



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A history of the club on its 100th anniversary:

a story which builds on 19th century philanthropic ideals and culminates in the thriving local athletics club which is Eton Manor AC today

by John Few

This pamphlet is sponsored and printed by Schwartz Printing, and we thank them for their continued support of our club.



Introduction

I have to be thankful to individuals such as Jim Lewis ('From Eton Manor to the Olympics'), Margaret Chapman ('A history of St. Mary of Eton 1880-1980') and David Boote (Leyton and Leytonstone Historical Society) all of whom have written on this subject. Fred Spencer (Secretary to the Eton Manor Association) wrote a summary of Eton Manor's history and the Manor's connections to the Olympics when the Poet Laureate (Carol Ann Duffy) visited Eton Manor Rugby Club in 2012, and this was useful too.

The archive held at the Bishopsgate Institute is the most comprehensive source of information on the history of the Eton Manor Boys' Club and has been very useful, together with the article by Michelle Johansen regarding the Heritage Lottery funded 'Up the Manor' oral history project (2007-2008). Michelle was the project leader and she involved pupils of George Mitchell School in Leyton, who interviewed Eton Manor 'old boys' whom I also have to thank for their insights into club life quoted in this text.

The historical landscape of Eton Manor Boys' Club seems more dramatic and colourful during the first half of the twentieth century. The ingredients of massive social change, two world wars and the fact that the club was an amalgam of many different interests and sports, so was much larger than the residual clubs that survived, make this inevitable.

Needless to say, present members of the club have been an invaluable source of information and reminiscence, in particular Glyn Sayer, Tom Everitt (currently our oldest active member), Peter Kearsley, Steve Adams and Roger Alburey. Other members of the club who have longstanding memories of Eton Manor are Steve's brother, Keith Adams (for many years our Treasurer) and brothers Paul and Michael Cates. (Michael was our fastest club runner for a number of years and has been a member of Eton Manor since he was seven years old.)

Before you read on it only remains to give voice to the club's motto:

Up the Manor!

At the beginning

It often surprises people that Eton Manor, based as it is in Leyton (London E10) has a connection with that bastion of privilege near Windsor Castle: Eton College. But as this story will explain, Eton College made a commitment to the East End of London through its mission to the poor and vulnerable in Hackney Wick and that connection is still evident in the Mission church, St. Mary of Eton at Eastway. Visiting the church will put you at the very beginning of Eton College's involvement in the local area.

The club's true history is a long one; after all, our namesake Eton College was itself established a while ago, in 1440. Nearer to our time, the original 'primal soup' from which we emerged as a club is still there, namely the district of Hackney Wick, once a notorious island of poverty, but still an island of sorts hemmed in by a motorway, the River Lea and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Today some of the old factories and warehouses have become artists' studios and social change in the area seem to be on the way.

In the late 19th century, Victorian society was full of energy and self confidence. It was a time of massive industrial and technological advances and expansionist policies abroad which led to the acquisition of great wealth. However, this was also a society not a little apprehensive about the pace of change and its consequences. It was a deeply segregated society where the wealth of the nation resided in few hands and the armies of the poor were in a sorry state. The realisation that many impoverished families struggled in a land of plenty prompted generosity on the part of the enlightened 'well to do', as well as a fear that the poor were spiralling down in cultural, spiritual and physical degeneration that might weaken society as a whole or build a revolution against the well off.

Many Christian organisations set up missions in the poorer areas of the country as they had been doing in what were perceived as more exotic locations such as Africa. The East End of London was one such destination.

Often it was religious piety that prompted a descent into the abyss of the East End, but it should be acknowledged that a spirit of generosity and concern for the less well-off inspired such individuals as Frederick Charrington (of the brewing family) and Angela Burdett-Coutts (in 1837 the wealthiest woman in England) to make it their life's work to help the poor and disadvantaged, pledging a good deal of money and personal energy to this end.

From the mid 19th century onwards there was a growing awareness of the needs of young people and a burgeoning youth provision developed from that time onwards. Notable examples were the Young Men's Christian Association

(YMCA) which was formed in 1844, while in 1878 Maude Stanley pioneered work with young girls. On a more militaristic basis, the Boys' Brigade was formed in 1883 and in 1907 Baden Powell set up the scouting movement.

From the 1880s Eton College had run a mission in the East End, in Hackney Wick, and was the first of the public schools to set up a mission in London. As mentioned earlier, the Mission church, St. Mary of Eton, is still in existence and continues to be involved with local community projects.



St. Mary of Eton Church, Eastway, Hackney Wick (2012)

One of the direct descendants of the Mission's activities was the Eton Mission Rowing Club in Wallis Road, Hackney Wick. This venerable club finally had to succumb to the 2012 London Olympics juggernaut when the Olympic Development Authority compulsorily purchased some of its property, and because of the closing of the River Lea for security reasons in 2012 it had to cease operation at that venue, at least for the time being.

The Mission set up two boys' clubs: one was described as 'the rough boys' club' known as the Mallard Street club and a gentler club (for boys who had been members of the Mission Sunday School) was called the Selwyn Street Club. These clubs eventually merged to become The Eton Mission Boys' Club, taking boys from the ages of fourteen to sixteen. Helpers from Eton College ran the club, becoming residents in the area. One of the helpers was the grandson of the Duke of Wellington, Gerald Wellesley, who joined the Mission when he was twenty-two years old.

Wellesley became a full-time club leader, formed the Eton Otters Swimming Club and organised the first boys' camp at Cuckoo Weir (a backwater of the River Thames at Windsor). He also enrolled the club as a member of the London Federation of Working Boys' Clubs.

Wellesley then noticed a gap in the Mission's scope in that there was no provision for boys who left the club – the only facilities were for young boys and men. He feared that on leaving the club, the boys would drift back to the street corner and their 'rescue' would have been a waste of time. The Mission was not prepared to establish an 'old boys' club' so Wellesley, with the support of friends (Arthur Villiers, Alfred Wagg and Edward Cadogan) founded the Eton Old Boys' Club in Dainty Street in 1909.

1913

Athletics was one of many activities of the Old Boys' Club, which offered a wide range of sporting and educational pastimes. It would be some years before different specialist clubs emerged from this bedrock of facilities but 1913 is the year that the Eton Manor name came into being due to the split from the Mission (following a row about money) and is therefore a convenient time from which to measure our centenary. By July of that year, with much effort and sponsorship, Wellesley finally succeeded in establishing a purpose-built complex in Riseholme Street, Hackney Wick, combining Hackney Wick Dairy Farm and Manor House (from which the 'Manor' in Eton Manor derives). This provided sporting, as well as educational opportunities, with professional tutors from Eton and experienced sporting coaches teaching a wide range of disciplines from table tennis to athletics.



The Riseholme Street clubhouse (1913)

Chin-wag, the club magazine, had its first edition in March 1913. This provided a vital link between the club and members who were serving abroad during the two world wars. Club members stationed overseas were given contact addresses through *Chin-wag* whereby they could be supported as Eton Manor members while away, an illustration of how being a 'Manorite' could be all-encompassing.



Riseholme Court built on the site of the old Riseholme Street (2012)

There was much interest in the development of the new club house from a range of wealthy individuals. The list of donors reads like a 'Who's Who' of Edwardian society with such names as the Duke of Westminster, Rothschild, Guinness and Astor. Three divisions of the club shared the premises: one for 14 to 18-year-olds, then another for 18 to 25-year-olds and finally a proper old boys' club for over 25-year-olds. The Manor House remained behind the new premises in Riseholme Street as a residence for old Etonians who came to visit.

Eton Manor was born!

After 1913

The Victorian and Edwardian periods ended with the First World War but the club carried on through the war, run by Alfred Wagg with the help of a local headmaster, while Gerald Wellesley, Arthur Villiers and Edward Cadogan were away serving in the army. The war had an impact on Eton Manor and took the lives of twenty-one of its members.

In the post-war period Eton Manor was instrumental as a proving ground for outstanding athletes. For example, the middleweight boxer Harry Mallin, who trained at Eton Manor, was the first boxer to successfully defend an Olympic title, winning gold medals in both the 1920 and 1924 games, as well as being British Champion for five years in a row from 1919 to 1923.

1924: The Eton Manor Trust

In 1924 the three old Etonians who were involved with Gerald Wellesley in his enterprise at Riseholme Street set up the Manor Charitable Trust to manage and finance the Eton Manor clubs. Arthur Villiers was a money man in the City and was generous in his financial donations to the Trust. He was a director of Barings Bank (from whose board he retired in 1954) and Eton Manor members were encouraged to take advantage of the investment opportunities which such a bank afforded.

Edward Cadogan was also a generous benefactor, while Alfred Wagg developed land close to his family home, at The Isle of Thorns in Sussex, providing a camp site, pavilions, playing fields, swimming pool, novelty golf course, football and cricket pitches as well as dormitories, all for the use of the boys' club and other organisations.

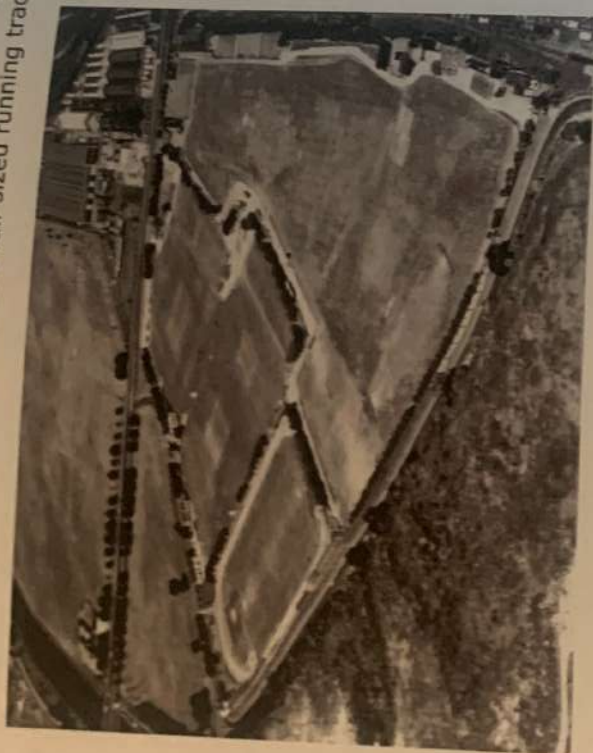
Summer camps had previously been hosted by Eton College at Cuckoo Weir on the Thames but this had to be abandoned in the late 1940s following concerns about polio. From the 1930s Edward Cadogan also provided club members with holidays at his Oxfordshire home, The Warren Farm, and opened up his family home in 1951 for reading or study weekends for Eton Manor boys.

The Manor Charitable Trust is known today as The Villiers Park Educational Trust (www.villierspark.org.uk) and is currently a leading source of expertise in providing for gifted and talented students aged 14-19 years, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Wilderness, the club's sports ground

In the early 1920s Wellesley and the other three old Etonians acquired, on behalf of the club, around thirty-two acres of ground on Hackney Marshes. These were transformed into a renowned sports complex and named The Wilderness. It had nine football pitches, two rugby pitches, six tennis courts,

several cricket pitches, a squash court, netball court, bowling green, physiotherapy room and a stadium as well as a full-sized running track.



The Wilderness (date unknown)

The Eton Manor athletics section, known informally as the 'Harriers', used the facilities at Riseholme Street (from where they organised runs) as well as using The Wilderness provision.



G. Franklin in the Long Jump at the Wilderness (1938)

The New Leadership

Following Gerald Wellesley's departure from Hackney Wick in 1922, Arthur Villiers (generally known as Major Villiers) became the driving force behind Eton Manor. He eventually built a modest house on the edge of The Wilderness, living there until his death in 1969.

Major Villiers gave much help and support to Eton Manor members outside of club activities, such as helping them with housing and employment. He bought up and built properties after the Second World War in Hackney and other East London suburbs, notably Onslow Gardens and nearby streets in South Woodford. He rehoused around one hundred and fifty old boys and their families at low rents and even rent free.

Eton Manor members talk of that time as not so much an experience of being members of a club but more like being members of a family, such were the long-standing and close ties developed.

It is hard to imagine now how inclusive Eton Manor life was for its members at that time, nor perhaps how important the personal and emotional support provided to them and David Chapman, who joined in 1960, thought Eton Manor was about 'companionship through sport'. At a time when parents were obliged to work long hours in often physically demanding employment many young men may have missed out on some aspects of family support as they grew up. It is not, therefore, surprising that Eton Manor filled this vacuum.

Doug Bristow, who joined the club in 1945, described the experience of joining Eton Manor as 'almost like going into a convent'. Patrick Smith (joining in 1946) said he 'used to spend practically all (his) summer over at The Wilderness', cycling there first thing in the morning and staying there 'until late in the evening'.

Girls too!

In 1942 Brookfield Manor Girls Club was founded, consisting mainly of the girlfriends and sisters of members of Eton Manor Boys Club. The club initially met in the Eton Manor club house before moving to other venues in Hackney Wick and Leyton. Due to declining membership the girls' club finally closed in 1991. It was also in the early 1990s that the athletics section began to receive women runners and the beginnings of a women's membership began, so ending about eighty years of male-only membership.



Brookfield Manor Girls Club members (date unknown)

The Welfare State

From the inter-war years onwards the state began to be more involved in the provision of services for young people. In 1937 the Physical Training and Recreation Act came into existence, encouraging local education authorities to make provision for physical training and recreational facilities for young people and this led to local authorities becoming more involved in youth services. In 1959 the Alberman Report was released and looked into how local government could take more responsibility for providing extracurricular activities for young people. However, despite more statutory involvement in provision for young people, many clubs were still only able to operate thanks to individual or church support, as public money was never enough.

The Track

Six hundred Eton Manor members and managers fought in the Second World War. Despite losing sixty members in the conflict, the spirit of Eton Manor lived on, with Major Villiers still in control. Eton Manor was given a boost when, in 1948, Villiers acquired the redundant Olympics athletic track from Wembley Stadium and had it re-laid on The Wilderness. The venue had floodlighting installed in 1951 and the Eton Manor track was the first floodlit athletics track in Britain, attracting top athletes including Roger Bannister and Chris Brasher.



The track with floodlighting installed (date unknown)

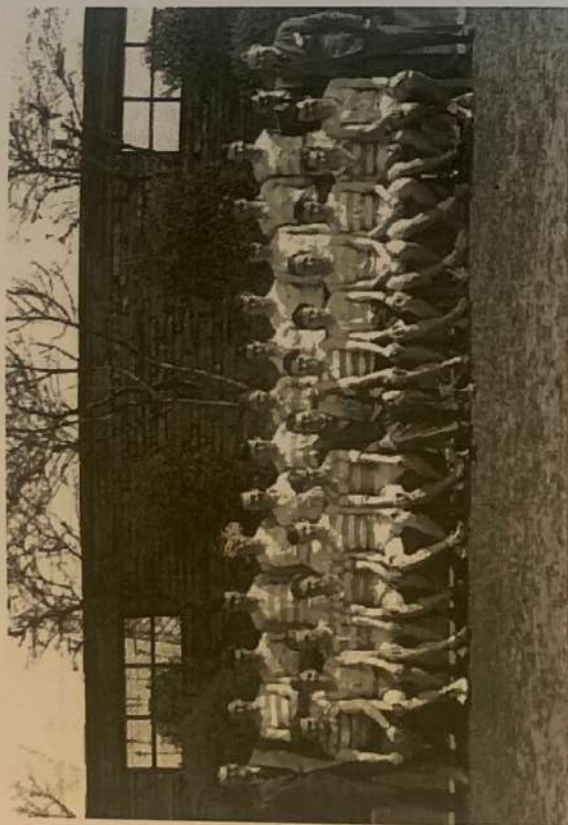
Eton Manor and the Olympics of the past

Les Golding, former Eton Manor Boys Club member and Honorary Secretary to the Eton Manor Harriers for many years, accompanied the Olympics flame in the 1948 Olympics on its last stage into the stadium and was also team manager for Great Britain at the 1968 Tokyo Olympics. He devoted much of his adult life to the development of young athletes and Les' son, Steve Golding, celebrated fifty years of his own club membership in 2011, carrying on the family connection with the club. Les Golding's high public profile may well have played an important role in keeping Eton Manor athletics alive during some very lean times in later decades, once the main boys' club closed, as will be described below.

Another significant Olympic connection was a former president of the Harriers, K. 'Sandy' Duncan, who became a junior member of the British Olympic Committee. In 1948 he had the duty of escorting the Olympic flame across Europe, ensuring it arrived on time at the opening ceremony at Wembley. Sandy became secretary to the Committee for some twenty seven years and represented Great Britain in an official role as 'Chef de Mission' at the opening ceremonies of five summer and five winter Olympic Games.

Nearer to home, it was becoming clear through the 50s and 60s that a boys' club was no longer attractive or needed. Young people had more money and families had a better standard of living. Working hours were being reduced,

so parents had more time and energy to devote to family life in the home. On the other hand, young people had more opportunities for diversion outside their home area, aided by increased mobility through vehicle ownership. Boys' clubs were therefore perceived as somewhat out-dated and parochial.



The Eton Manor athletics team (1950s)

The Wilderness was also declining in popularity and was underused. Villiers was increasingly concerned about costs which were exacerbated by changes in Eton Manor's charitable status. It also didn't help that the London County Council was planning to build a motorway through Hackney Wick and this would require the demolition of the clubhouse in Riseholme Street and, with it, the Manor House. Villiers waited until the death of Evelyn Baring, one of the last of the long term supporters, before he finally closed down the club in 1967. In an attempt to try and cut The Wilderness' links with the past, Villiers had the grounds renamed 'Eaton Park'.

The Lea Valley Park Authority took over the running of The Wilderness sports ground but was not effective in doing so. It was finally closed in 2001 and the buildings in the grounds were demolished in 2007. Some of the different sporting activities that had taken place under the Eton Manor banner continued as separate clubs. Between 1967 and the full closure of The Wilderness site, the Eton Manor cricket and rugby clubs were able to return to use it and the athletics section, the Eton Manor Harriers also still had intermittent access to it for a large number of years.

Eton Manor after 1967, including the independent Eton Manor Athletics Club

The spirit of Eton Manor continued after the closure of The Wilderness in the form of independent Eton Manor clubs, including rugby, cricket, swimming and athletics. The Eton Manor Association was formed so that members of the sports sections could meet and keep the Eton Manor spirit alive. The Association originally had its club house in Sidmouth Road, Leyton but in recent times has met at the Rugby Club in Nutter Lane, Wanstead (the New Wilderness). Various activities are organised by the Association such as an annual Remembrance Sunday Service. A replica Eton Manor War Memorial was located at the New Wilderness until memorials from The Wilderness (kept in preservation during the building of the Olympic Park) could be re-erected in a dedicated garden within the original Eton Manor complex. In September 2007 the Association held its centenary dinner with around four hundred 'old boys' and partners attending. At the beginning of the 2012 Olympics year, the Poet Laureate, Carol Anne Duffy, visited the New Wilderness in Wanstead to deliver a poem she had dedicated to Eton Manor and referring to the history of Eton Manor Boys' club and The Wilderness.



The Eton Manor poem, written by Carol Ann Duffy (2012)

"The past is all around us, in the air,
the acres here were once 'the Wilderness'-
"Blimey, it's fit for a millionaire"-
where Eton Manor Boys Club came to train;
or, in the Clubhouse (built 1913),
translated poverty to self-esteem,
camaraderie, and optimism smiled in smiles.

Hackney Wick-
fleas, flies, bin-lids, Clarnico's Jam; the poor
enclosed by railway, marshland, factories, canal-
where Wellesley, Villiers, Wagg, Cadogan came,
philanthropists, to clear a glorious space;
connect the power of place to human hope,
through World War One, the Blitz, till 1967...
on this spot, functional, free, real- heaven.

This is legacy-
young lives respected, cherished, valued, helped
to sprint, swim, bowl, box, play, excel, belong;
believe community is self in multitude-
the way the past still dedicates to us
its distant, present light. The same high sky,
same East End moon, above this reclaimed wilderness,
where relay boys are raced by running ghosts."

As for the Athletics Club, when a presence in Hackney at The Wilderness was no longer viable (although the club returned there from time to time before final closure), it began a journey through Leyton. Demolitions and changes of use obliged the very small club to move from one building to another. With the continuing strong focus on activities for boys, it was often those who had fathers involved who were the younger participants. Longstanding member Peter Kearsey recalls that in the club's lean years of the 1970s and 80s it could be hard to get teams together for competition and there would only be a handful of members on training nights. Current member Paul Cates was a teenage runner who left the club when he was sixteen, at a time that he recalls the club as 'lively'. It was then still offering annual trips away, for both teens and adults, to try out lots of different sports, including archery, thus very much still in the original Eton Manor tradition of widening club members' horizons. Paul is an example of a trend noted about running club membership in recent decades, namely that younger members may drift away from competitive athletics in their teens, but sometimes re-join a club later, in Paul's case when he was in his 30s. By contrast, several current members, including Glyn Sayer, now in his late 60s, and George Smith, our Life President, now in his early 80s, have been in continuous membership since their teens.

The athletics club first re-established itself in the playing fields pavilion on Marsh Lane, Leyton, just across from what is now The Lammas School and also across from the club's present address at The Cottage. The club subsequently made use of the Coronation Gardens tennis club on the site of what is now the Score Project (a community sports initiative run by Leyton Orient Football Club). It later had access to the London Borough of Waltham Forest-owned Ive Farm site in Leyton, which had a cinder track. When the building at Ive Farm became unavailable, the club continued to use the track there once a week, as it was only a short jog away from The Cottage on Marsh Lane, Leyton, its base since the 1990s. In 1999 the Score Project rebuilt the pavilion, providing changing rooms for those using the football ground within Ive Farm, whilst Eton Manor had continued access to the track. Cost considerations prevented the Score Project continuing its investment.



The pavilion on Marsh Lane Playing Fields, shortly before demolition (2012)



The Ive Farm changing rooms and old cinder track (2012)

Sadly the changing rooms were vandalised and the track is now overgrown and in disrepair, as can be seen in the photos on the previous page.

Eton Manor Athletics Club has retained its agreement with the local borough council for use of The Cottage in Marsh Lane. It also uses track facilities (no longer a jog away) at Waltham Forest Pool and Track off Chingford Road, Walthamstow, which is where the young athletes section also meet.

The club invested some considerable time and effort in establishing proper changing and shower facilities at The Cottage through the commitment of Steve Beckett, the then club Secretary, and with the help of other club members who had the necessary trade skills. The building's continuing upkeep since then has owed much to the dedicated attentions paid to it by Tom and Joan Everitt, who have been involved with the club since the 1970s, plus various 'work parties' of other club members over the years. Tom has also maintained for decades a meticulous handwritten record of every individual club runner's race results, generally dubbed 'Tom's computer'.

Steve Beckett (with Pam Ackland-Snow) was also instrumental in continuing a commitment to the development of young athletes and latterly ran the young athletes section of the club. Current members Peter Kearsey and Tom Everitt recall the club's early connections with the London Federation of Boys' Clubs (originally the Federation of London Working Boys' Clubs). This enabled Eton Manor to initially engage with young athletes, who, through their competitive activity, gave a rationale for the club's continuing existence after the 60s.



Our current home The Cottage, 3 Marsh Lane (2012)

Breaking down barriers

In addition to the club's association with the London Federation of Boys' Clubs, two other developments probably ensured that Eton Manor would survive into the future. The first was the acceptance of women in athletics, with increasing numbers of women taking up running and secondly the realisation that (for both men and for women) age was not a barrier to participation.

As Peter and Tom pointed out to me, some Eton Manor members had gravitated to the club after a career in amateur football, where once you reached your forties in such a team sport you would have to think about retiring. The individually focussed sport of running, however, has no age barrier. Indeed it was probably a revelation to some to realise that once retired from football you could not only continue in sport but also retain competitive prowess. Runners in their 40s can sometimes offer serious competition to runners in their 20s. As individuals enter a new age cohort, whether this is 40, 50, 60 or beyond, they are able to compete against others in their age group.

Anecdotes from recent history

To try and give a flavour of what Eton Manor Athletics Club meant for members during the forty-odd years since The Wilderness closed in 1967, I've chosen a couple of long-standing member's recollections of what being a member of a more austere and much diminished organisation was like. Roger Alburey and Steve Adams give first-hand accounts of more challenging times.

My baptism of cross country running

Roger Alburey (written in 2012)

I recollect those Monday nights up at the Queen Elizabeth public house where 'the Manor' used to have an old tin shed for our cross country training runs through the forest. There would be about six or seven of us keen athletes usually taking part on a cold and wet night.

We'd come back to the hut all hot and sweaty after a five mile run and then Pete Coventry would say 'Right, who's washing their hair? You'll have to go last - you know the rules.' I was quite shocked until Steve Fenton explained that due to us only having a tin bath and only one large saucepan of hot

water (heated by an old Bunsen burner, all the mod cons) the last person in the bath could wash their hair and use soap!

You were given two minutes in the bath and being fifth or sixth was quite an experience, bathing in someone else's water (ugh!). Not for an officer. 'Don't worry,' said Steve 'We always put plenty of industrial strength Dettol into the water so you won't catch any germs.'

And, oh boy, was he right. If you were unlucky to have any cuts or abrasions you certainly knew about it for the next ten minutes after coming out of the bath. So, we usually headed for the 'Lizzie' to take on liquid sustenance to forget about our ailments.

My early memories of The Manor

Steve Adams (written in 2012)

My introduction to Eton Manor was through my brother, Keith. He had been a junior over the club in the 70s and in 1991 he went back to The Manor and started to run on a regular basis. His enthusiasm for his new fitness regime worked on me, so a few weeks later, I ventured to The Manor which was then based at Ive Farm. The club had a small hard core of runners, including some familiar names: Tom Everitt, Glyn Sayers, Pete Kersey, Steve Beckett, Mick Fitzgibbons, Bob Pitcher and his son, Neil and Michael Cates. At that time the club had a senior men's and junior section; it would take some time before the women's section would be established.

Ive Farm was a run down building from the 20s/30s with loads of character, little maintenance and definitely no heating! I remember the freezing showers, sometimes you just couldn't stand under them and had to run through, getting wet on the way and then dry before the water turned to ice.

I found myself totally immersed in the club; there was a great camaraderie amongst everyone. Steve Beckett was especially encouraging and persuaded myself and Keith to try and run with the pack. We struggled to keep up with this group of senior gentlemen even though we were half of some of their ages.

The training sessions were unforgiving if repetitive, 'Long Chats' in the winter, 3 Fields in the summer, always at the training speed known as 'eyeballs out'. No quarter was asked for, or offered, but it was a great atmosphere for trying to get the best out of yourself. I remember my first summer trying to stay with Tom, Glyn and the others. First I would stay on the pace for 2 miles,

then 3, then 4 and finally staying with the pack for the whole run which was around 5 miles. It was down to you to reach the pack's standard; the pack was not going to slow down for anyone. Finally, I stayed the distance; it was a fantastic feeling of achievement in running 5 or so miles at 6-minute mile pace. As Tom said, 'You are now a proper runner'.

The summer and winter leagues were the Chingford and Assembly leagues but we also took part in a lot of 10k, 10 mile and half marathon races in Essex.

We also combined with Orton to have a Track and Field team, travelling to compete in a silly amount of events to cover for the fact that we had one of the smallest teams. It was not unusual to run a sprint, relay, a jump, 5000 metres and steeplechase! At one meeting in Southend, Keith won a 400 metres hurdles race. Upon returning to the on-going pole vault he found out that another competitor had just vaulted above his height and the bar had been raised to Keith's personal best height. Still puffing and panting from the hurdles he had one attempt left to win. He gave himself 30 seconds then sprinted, up he went, the bar rattled then bounced up before gently resting back where it started. The small group of Manorites were on our feet whooping and hollering like mad after seeing Keith win a hurdles race and the pole vault in the space of a minute. Great memories that still make me chuckle when we meet up with friends such as Paul Filler, Roger Warner and others who were part of the team at that time.

When not competing or taking our turn at marshalling we used to sit trackside, cheering friends' races, whilst tucking into the hamper of food that seemed to turn up at every meeting. This was provided courtesy of Bob Pitcher's wife Lorraine.

One tradition that has stuck has been the friendly nature and willingness to head for the pub after a hard-run race or track meeting. Originally we met at the Alma, then the Hollybush, both now closed for many years; hopefully the same fate does not fall on the Drum.

After a few years we left Ive Farm and became nomads with no permanent club house. We had a few months at the Coronation Gardens tennis club (opposite the Orient in Oliver Road) since demolished to make way for the Score Project. Then we had our beloved club house. Steve Beckett deserves enormous credit for the effort he put in during this period. The club house was dingy, derelict but it was our own for a peppercorn rent. It took 12 months of hard work to install the changing rooms, showers and bring the place towards looking like a clubhouse. In those days we used the upstairs to change until the work was completed.

The club has made huge strides forward since my early days and we are set up for a much brighter future. Nevertheless the early 90's were simpler times, no strategic plans but an emphasis on hard training and hard racing amongst friends.

'Memories of an Old Manorite'

Roger Alburey (written in 2012)

Each time I return to the club from a training run, I often look at the myriad of pictures on the Eton Manor club board and smile when I see this small but amusing club photo.

I am drawn to the picture below, soon after it was taken Brian managed somehow to throw his car keys into the boot of his new yellow Ford Capri and then realised that the boot was locked. We did have fun trying to dismantle his car but eventually a kind gentleman had a key that fitted the boot and everyone went back to the campsite happy!



'Black Rock Sands' in North Wales (1980)

From left to right (back row): Glyn Sayer, Brian Johnson, Tony Lewis, Roger Alburey; front row: Steve Beckett, Cliff Warren, Pete Coventry, Steve Fenton.

You can just make out the words 'Winners 1980' written in the sand and I am reminded that I was then a mere twenty-three years old when the picture was taken – how time flies.

But my association with 'the Manor' preceded this picture by some two or three years. I can recall that I usually got roped into running an Assembly League race now and again and usually ended up in last place or nearly last in the race. I just did it for fun and to drink vast quantities of beer afterwards. There was a definite sense of fun with the people at the club at that time and friendships soon developed – although the club members were few in number.

Manor Moments

Below I quote more voices from the current collection of portraits of club members in The Cottage tea room, which are supplemented by their favourite 'Manor Moments'. Here is a sample:

Dave Daugirda (joined July 2010): The moment I realised I could wear a (running) vest and not feel weird and self conscious.

Teresa Persighetti (joined June 1999): Running round a snow covered Hackney Marsh, by the ghostly light of Spitalfields Market.

Christina Watson (joined June 2000): Winning the club handicap in my first year in front of my daughter. Also trying to teach the men to salsa and then dancing till late at a club BBQ.

Joan Everitt (joined 1974): The club barbecue when the boozy girls drank all the men's beers. That night, every drop of liquid was polished off.

Stephen Stone (joined January 2011): Finishing any race!

Eton Manor in 2012 and the London Olympics

Eton Manor's former Wilderness sports ground is now within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and it hosted Paralympic tennis in the 2012 London Olympic Games. In the post-Olympics 'legacy' development, it will contain four indoor and six outdoor tennis courts, two international hockey pitches, five-a-side football pitches and a mountain bike trail, continuing the tradition of sports facilities first established on this site through the generosity of old Etonians.



Olympics Athletics Stadium (2012)



Spectator facilities at Eton Manor Stadium on the Olympic Park (2012), built on the site of The Wilderness



Victoria Park, 3.5 mile Assembly League Race (2012)

The club at a recent race at Victoria Park, June 2012 where the women's A and B teams came first!

Back row, standing left to right: Robert M, Dave D, Mick C, Tom E, Alison G, Steven S, Mary A, Dave B, Rachel B, Lance T, Steve A, Martin H, Sharon B, Christina W, George F, Bill B, Jeff F, Louise V, Teresa P, Jenni H, Alex E, Anthony L, Val A, Miguel S, Kate M, Alex G, Sacha A, Andy R.

Front Row, left to right: Qamil I Simon D, Dan H, Adrian F, Glyn S.

The club in 2013 and going forward

Eton Manor Athletics Club continues to flourish and recent changes in the club's profile, particularly the introduction of a beginners course and the hosting of our own league races, have enabled membership to grow.

Love 2 Run is a running programme delivered by members of Eton Manor Athletics Club that encourages people to either start running or progress to achieve more.

The club appreciates that not everyone wants to compete in races and some would like to run / jog to obtain a level of fitness; this programme offers people the opportunity to obtain that level of fitness in a safe and friendly environment, while running / jogging with others of a similar ability. Our Love 2 Run programme can take you in nine weeks from no running to running 5k. The club has also started to host our own league races, all of this has enabled membership to grow.

In the last year the club has hit a purple patch (just in time for our centenary), winning local trophies, the Ware Cup and Physical Shield, as well as good performances in the county and national cross country championships.



Recent graduates of our 'Love 2 Run' programme for beginners



Enjoying refreshment in The Cottage tea room after a tough training session (2012)

The club remains in residence at The Cottage, Marsh Lane, which is highlighted in the photo above. Those visible from right of photograph going anti-clockwise:

Paul C, Tom E, Alex G, Stephen D, Mimosa I, Wilma H, Rachel B, Teresa P, Dan H, Val A and Allison W.



Eton Manor AC Baton Relay (Dec 2012)

Back row: Miguel S, Jeff F, George F, Teresa P, Sarah T, Steve D, Abby A, Rachel B, Alex E, Jenni H, Atrat S, Claire F, Tom E

Next row: Jane R, Dave N, Shen K, Michael C, Bill B, Wilma H, Steph B, Robert M, Jenny M, Lance T, Nick P, Louise C, Tomas S, Paul B, John F, Brendan, Andy R, Paul C, Anthony P, Steve A, Steve S, Val A, Terry, Molly C, Taryne M, Eran K, Urata, Gail B.

Next row: Joan E, Richard E, Quamil I, Simon D, Roger L, Alison G, Carmen S, Alison W, Ian L.

Front Row: Roger A, Sarah F, Christina W, Zoe W, Dave D, Claire W, Roger P, Dan H, Steve W, Caroline B, Taylor, Alex G, Adrian F.

In a tradition going back over 80 years (the earliest record for this race is in 1932), this annual event involves relay teams comprising a mix of abilities, such that each team has a real chance of winning.

The current record times for this 1.1 mile race are as follows

Senior Man	Malcolm Absalom	5mins	14secs	in 1969
Men's Vet 40	George Smith	5mins	47secs	in 1969
Men's Vet 50	George Smith	5mins	57secs	in 1979
Men's Vet 60	Tom Everitt	6mins	30secs	in 1994
Men's Vet 70	Tom Everitt	7mins	59secs	in 2006
Senior Woman	Alex Gounelas	6mins	32secs	in 2012
Women's Vet 35	Sarah Flanagan	6mins	59secs	in 2012
Women's Vet 45	Steph Baxter	7mins	31secs	in 2005 & 2006
Women's Vet 55	Steph Baxter	8mins	05secs	in 2011
Women's Vet 60	Karen Miller	10mins	58secs	in 1997

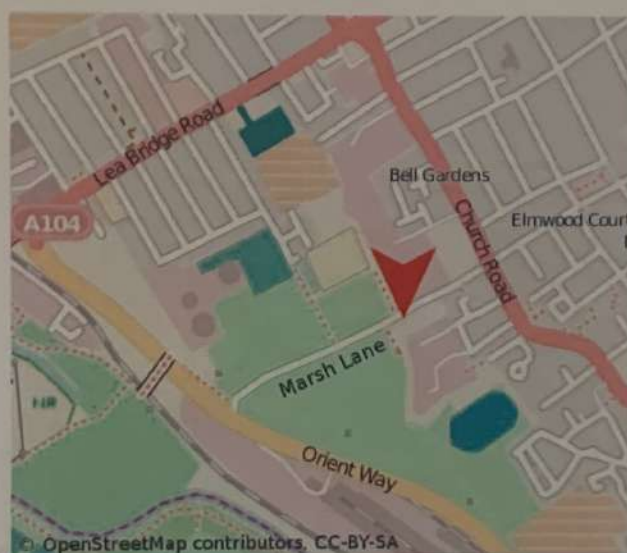
Eton Manor AC is still a thriving local athletics club that is always looking for new members.

We are

A FRIENDLY ATHLETICS CLUB FOR RUNNERS OF ALL AGES AND STANDARDS

COME AND JOIN US

The Cottage, 3 Marsh Lane, London, E10 7BL



VISIT US AT

www.eton-manor.com

YOU CAN ALSO



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agvfrost@hotmail.com

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