

SPARTA Newsletter

WINTER WONDERS

Welcome to SPARTA Winter 2024 Newsletter.

Yes, it's that time of the year when the season changes. It's been a busy few months for SPARTA and we have had changes here too.



The first thing to report is that SPARTA has a new Chairman. Rod Paterson has stood down and we are pleased to welcome Nick Adams (above) as the new Chair of SPARTA. More later in the newsletter.

Also in this issue of the SPARTA newsletter there is a report from the Civil Service Cross Country Championship. Which was held at Parliament Hill Fields in London and where the SPARTA team had some great success.



Miles Knight at the CS Cross Country Championship.

We also invite you to share your views at the upcoming SPARTA AGM, details of which can be found in the blue box on the right-hand side of this page.

Also in this edition I give you an insight into the GMH Friday Fitness classes that I have been running since 2011.

I hope that you enjoy this newsletter.

Jason Marchant -SPARTA General Secretary



Fitness Class
Free Every Friday 12.30
Live Online or in GMH

SPARTA AGM DATE SET

SPARTA AGM

The SPARTA AGM takes place on

11th December 2024 at 4.30pm in room 4.7 Great Minster House

Everyone is welcome to attend. If you haven't received an invite and papers then please contact SPARTA@dft.gov.uk

SPARTA Board Games Clubs

There are board games clubs spread around the MHCLG and DfT Buildings. If you are interested in joining, then please get in touch.

On **18th December** at 5.30pm in the 5th floor Canteen in GMH, the London club is meeting. All are welcome to come along and join the fun.



Check out the SPARTA website for upcoming events



ALL CHANGE AT THE TOP

SPARTA are pleased to welcome a new Chair.

On 1st October SPARTA Chairman Rod Paterson stepped down and Nick Adams has taken over the role of SPARTA Chair.



Rod said “I will be sorry to step down but, as many of you know, for the last three years I have been Chair whilst on secondment to the National Shipbuilding Office (NSO) based in the Ministry of Defence. We have made it work but, not being located in either DfT or MHCLG, has undoubtedly been a drawback. Then, earlier this year, I became the new Chief Executive of the NSO which means formally moving to the Ministry of Defence. I therefore feel this is the right time for me to step down with Nick able to bring fresh ideas and direction to the role.

I hope that I leave SPARTA in a better position than when I started. I would like to have devoted more time to the Association and spent more time out and about at events, but I hope I have made a positive

contribution, nonetheless. In my time, I am proudest of the meaningful role SPARTA played during Covid, even if in a small way, supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff in an incredibly challenging time for everyone personally and professionally. I am proud too of the way our clubs and societies have re-started and flourished as the pandemic ended, long may that continue.



I am delighted to say that I step down with my successor Nick Adams (above), a Department for Transport Deputy Director based in Great Minster House, already in place. Nick is passionate about SPARTA and keen to ensure the Association continues to be as relevant in the future as it was when it was first established over 50 years ago.”

Welcome to Nick and Good luck to Rod, we will miss you.

UPCOMING SPARTA CLUB FIXTURES/EVENTS

December

11th – SPARTA Annual General Meeting – 4:30pm till 5:30pm – Room 4.7, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road and Online via Teams

18th – SPARTA Board Games Club – GMH Canteen – 5.30pm

January

14th – SPARTA History Society Talk – Robespierre & the French Revolutionary Terror - Professor Marisa Linton Online Talk from GMH Room 2.15 at 1pm

14th – SPARTA Personal Safety Course – Stay Safe with SPARTA this Winter – 5:00pm Room LG1, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road

Keep up to date with the SPARTA website.

<https://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/>



SPARTA SHINE AT CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPS

The SPARTA team achieved miracles at the recent Civil Service Cross country Championships.

Runners from across the regions and across MHCLG and DfT came together to compete at the Civil Service Cross Country Championships on 16th October at Parliament Hill Fields in London.

The Civil Service Cross Country Championships has a long history dating back over 100 years. Over that period there have been many individual winners from both MHCLG and DfT and their predecessors but rarely have our departments won a team trophy. The team trophies have been dominated by the likes of the MoD, DEFRA and other larger Departments.



So, it was a huge achievement for our Men's team to win the team trophy at the event on a bright sunny day.

Parliament Hill Fields is part of Hampstead Heath and appears in many films and TV series so if you visited it, you would recognise the area and wouldn't be surprised if you found yourself imagining Hugh Grant walking along the very footpaths that you are using.

As you can expect with a name like Parliament Hill the cross-country course was rather hilly and a good test for any runner undertaking the 8km course but that didn't stop our runners from showing what they are capable of doing.



The SPARTA team was led home by David Taylor (above wearing blue) who finished 2nd in a time of 31 minutes 32 seconds, next in was Luke Watson in 4th place (below wearing blue), closely followed by Richard Wall in 5th.

With 4 runners to complete the team it was a nervous wait for our final scoring runner who was Matt King who finished in a fantastic 21st place with George Plemper (24th) Thomas Speed (25th) and Simon Cereda (29th) only a few seconds behind him it was a real race to be the teams fourth scorer.



Dan Lineham 56 "working" up the hill.

David Taylor not only took home the silver medal for finishing second but was also the first runner aged 35 or over home so took the gold medal in his age group. It was great to see runners of all ages competing, the oldest was in the over 70's age group so it was truly an event for everyone. Full results of our runners are below and pictures from the event can be found on the SPARTA website.

<https://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/>

Results

- 2 David Taylor (98)
- 4 Luke Watson (108)
- 5 Richard Wall (105)
- 21 Matt King (49)
- 24 George Plemper (77)
- 25 Thomas Speed (92)
- 29 Simon Cereda (20)
- 48 Ben Toogood (101)
- 52 Dan Lineham (56)
- 53 Miles Knight (50)
- 58 Simon Birks (12)
- 74 Peter Brohan (14)
- 78 Maciej Idzikowski (42)
- 81 Tim Roast (83)



STAY SAFE WITH SPARTA THIS WINTER

Following on from this year's very popular course SPARTA is holding another Personal Safety course starting in January 2025.

Stay safe this winter with the help of SPARTA.

During the course Nick will cover all aspects of personal safety including situational awareness, practical safety tips, basic self-defense skills and many other areas.

offering solutions through awareness and resources. As industry experts, we can help stamp it out effectively.

Don't miss this opportunity to become part of a safer, more inclusive world. Reserve your spot today to transform your approach to safety and support."

As with all SPARTA activities we aim to keep the price reasonable for everyone attending so the cost will be £60 to non-SPARTA members and £40 for SPARTA members.

The classes are available to all staff and will take place in Room LG1 in Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road starting on 14th January 2025 at 5pm.

If you are interested in attending the Personal Safety course, then please get in touch with us at SPARTA@dft.gov.uk for more information.



SPARTA are very proud to announce that following the very popular Personal Safety class in January 2024 we are repeating the course this winter.

The course will run every Tuesday for a period of 8 weeks starting on 14 January 2025. It is provided by Stay Safe Global who provide similar training for companies including Google, Infosys, DXC Technology, and Salesforce.

The course is run by Sifu Nick Martin from the UK Wing Chun Kung Fu Association who has taught this course across the world. Why not come and meet him.

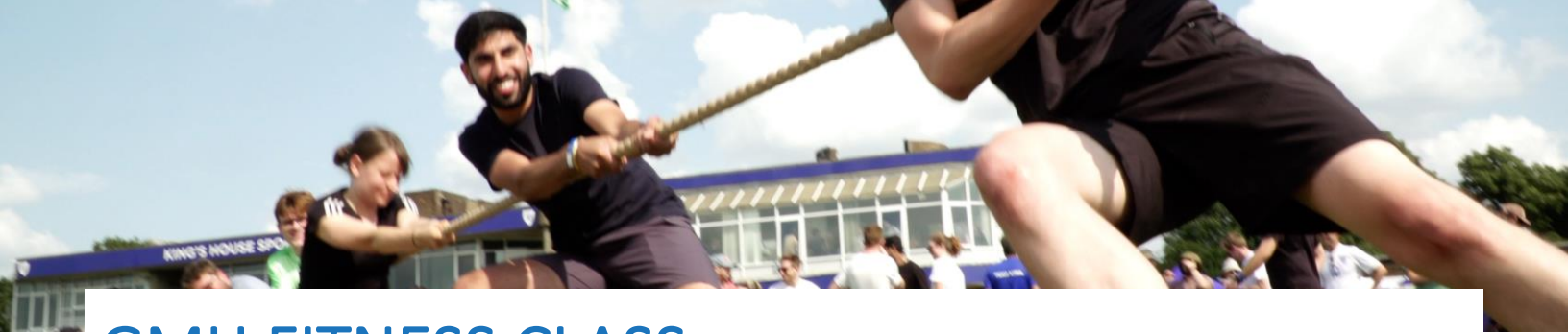
Stay Safe Global have said;

"We are thrilled to announce the return of our highly acclaimed personal safety training program, starting January 14th.

A holistic 360 approach, developed from the valuable experiences of London based female refuges, our courses keep survivor experience at the heart of organisational support, and is now trusted by global leaders such as Google and Salesforce.

*Our focus is on trauma-informed strategies for **danger awareness, travel safety, and effective physical escape techniques.** We also tackle misogynistic extremism,*





GMH FITNESS CLASS

Jason Marchant has been running GMH Fitness classes since September 2011. He tells us why.

It seems like an age ago that my friend Pavlos Kakoulli told me that the trainer for the Circuits and Boxercise Training in GMH, Barney McGhee was having to give up and so the classes were going to have to stop.

It took a while, but we settled into a class shape that only took an hour and worked for everyone.

The great thing about these classes is that anyone of any fitness level can benefit from them. They are not elitest at all.



Before Covid I would just stand there and coach the sessions but during lockdown I started coaching the sessions live online so had to do the exercises myself.

Post Covid I decided to continue doing the exercises with the class so at the end I will have worked just as hard as all those attending.

It is a great feeling to know that I am able to use my athletics coaches' skills at work to the benefit of my colleagues.

For me every class since September 2011 has allowed me to help my friends and colleagues stay or get fitter for their daily life. What a pleasure that is.

If you are interested in attending these free classes, then do message me at SPARTA@dft.gov.uk

I have to admit that I was quite upset that such a worthwhile staff activity was coming to an end, so as a highly qualified athletics coach I decided to offer to take over. Barney was only too happy to pass the baton over to me.

As I didn't have any experience of Boxercise I had to drop that part of the Friday classes. The first few classes were a bit of a train wreck as I tried to implement the classes that I taught in a gym with my athletes into the confines of room LG1 Great Minster House.

WANT TO START A CLUB OR MAYBE HELP AT A CLUB?

SPARTA are always looking to build on our portfolio of clubs. If you want to start a club or are already running one and want SPARTA's help, then please get in contact.

Want to help at a current club? Then please get in contact with us:

SPARTA@dft.gov.uk

Details of current club contacts can be found on the SPARTA website

www.spartarecreation.co.uk/





THE SPARTA CLUBS

SPARTA supports a number of clubs and associations across the UK and is always looking to start new clubs. Here is just a taster of the current clubs

SPARTA TABLE
TENNIS CLUB 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk

SPARTA 
GOLF SOCIETY
www.spartagolf.co.uk/

YOGA CLASSES 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/yoga

SUPERSTARS 
CRICKET CLUB
www.superstarscricket.org.uk

NETBALL CLUB
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/netball

BOARD GAMES CLUB
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/board-games 

CIVIL 
SERVICE CHOIR
www.civilservicechoir.org.uk

HISTORY SOCIETY 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/history-society

FITNESS CLASSES 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/fitness-class

TENNIS CLUB 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tennis

TENPIN BOWLING 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tenpin-bowling

RUNNING CLUBS 
www.spartarecreation.co.uk/running

Check out all the SPARTA clubs on our website

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