

The logo for Serpentine, featuring the word "SERPENTINE" in bold, yellow, uppercase letters on a red background. Below the text is a horizontal bar with a yellow top half and a red bottom half.

## Green Belt Relay – Useful Information

Dear All,

This is the pre-event information for this year's Green Belt Relay. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact

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It might be a good idea to print this off and bring along with you for the weekend.

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## What To Do Before the Weekend

Before the weekend you'll be told the time and place for your Saturday morning minibus pick-up. You'll also be told which stages you'll be running on each day.

If at any point you realise you've got a problem and won't be able to run, **PLEASE** let us know as soon as you can. The earlier we know, the better chance we have to fill your place and still field complete teams.

**The most important thing is for you to show up on time with your Serpie top, running gear, and provisions, at your allocated pick-up location.** We'll hand out race numbers and stage maps at Hampton Court on Saturday morning. There's lots more information and stage descriptions you can look at in advance on the GBR website <http://www.greenbeltrelay.org.uk>.

You've already paid £28 each towards the minibus costs and for the evening buffet on Saturday. You'll need to pay for your B&B (£27 per person), drinks and other food in addition (diesel and race entry fees are paid for by the club) so please bring enough cash! You'll need to pay the hotel directly (cards accepted).

If any non-runner would like to come along to help and support, please let us know asap. There may well be room on the minibuses and in the hotel, but we need to know in advance.

## What To Bring

- Your Serpie vest / T-shirt (or 2 if you have them)
- Two sets of running gear (including 2 pairs of shoes if possible)
- Safety pins
- Food & drink for yourself for the weekend (energy bars, bananas, water, etc)
- Cash!

Trainers should be fine to run in for all stages, but it could be muddy. If your stage is mostly off-road, you may want to bring trail shoes, but spikes won't work, as there are paved sections on all stages. It's a good idea to **bring two sets of running gear, including shoes, if you can**, since they might get pretty wet or dirty on day one, if the weather is bad. It's also more pleasant for you to race in a fresh set of gear on Sunday. However, please don't pack too much stuff - you really won't need it and there isn't much room to spare in the buses.

Your minibus may stop at a pub for lunch (and drinks), but we could be running late, or your stage may be the one just after lunch, so you need to plan ahead and have food with you. Also, most start/finish locations are very rural and shops/cafes are in short supply, so it's best to play safe and bring supplies for both days, food & drink. We provide water for the runners on their stages, but we won't have enough for everyone to drink in the bus. In previous years people have baked cakes or other goodies to share with their bus-mates (hint!)

A word of advice, especially if you're running late in the day, please make sure you eat and drink enough during the day. We don't want anyone fainting on his or her stage!

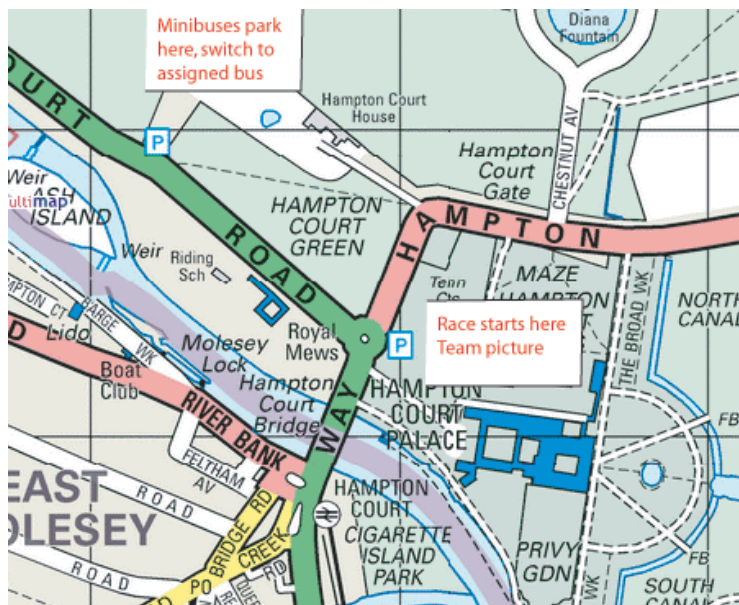
Please note too that your minibus is unlikely to pass many (or even any) cash points, and most small shops, cafes and rural pubs don't take debit cards for small purchases, so it's a good idea to take plenty of cash with you.

## How It All Works

Saturday morning pick-ups will be at various locations in London. You'll be told in advance where and when your pick-up is. Please make sure you get there on time.

All the minibuses will head to Hampton Court Palace and park in the same car park. **The minibus you travel to Hampton Court in is unlikely to be the one you will be leaving in**, so please make sure you move all of your belongings quickly to the minibus you are assigned to for Saturday.

We'll all walk over to the start of the race in the Palace grounds for a team photo.



**Straight after the start we need to get back to the minibuses asap**, since several minibuses will need to set off immediately to support runners and get runners to the start of their stages on time. If you're in one of the buses that needs to head off quickly, please don't delay others by hanging around chatting and try to have your loo stop before you head to the start rather than leaving it til the last minute.

Your assigned minibus will have your race number, a paper copy of your stage map, and runners' handbooks and these will be handed out as you set off. Please read the handbook – there's lots of useful stuff in it - and do carry the map when you run your stage – it could stop you getting lost.

Every minibus has at least two drivers and we'll need at least one additional person on each bus acting as a navigator/organiser/helper. Please don't just sit there and watch, but volunteer to help with any jobs that are needed, all of our drivers are volunteers like you, and without their help we couldn't do this!

At the end of Day 1, we'll all stay at a hotel near the halfway point, for dinner and a well-earned rest. Those running stage 12 (the first stage on Sunday) need to get an early night since the race starts early on Sunday morning.

On Sunday, you might not be on the same bus as the one you were in on Saturday so **please check which bus you're on in advance!** Following the same routine as Saturday, we all end up at the Hawker Leisure Centre late on Sunday afternoon to watch the end of the final stage and find out who's won the relay. There's a bar, food and changing facilities. After the prizes have been presented, the minibuses will set off for central London.

## Runners' Information

When it's your turn to run, the people on your bus will support you as much as possible along your route and will meet you at the end. You'll then go on to the next stage your bus is allotted to so the other runners in your bus get their turn. A lot of the running is on footpaths and trails and there are very few marshals - this means you must find your own way! The route is well marked with arrows and a sawdust trail at strategic points, and you'll each be given a paper copy map on Saturday morning to study and carry with you, but it's not unknown for people to get lost! Don't worry though - it's really not as hard as it sounds :-)

We'd love to tell you for definite which stages you'll be running well in advance of the weekend and give you the maps to study, but with last minute changes it's virtually impossible to get the right maps to everyone in advance ;-)

You can check out all the maps in advance on the GBR website and you might want to look at your stages on an OS map too. As soon as you know which stages you'll be running (even if this is only the day before or on the day of the race) it's a good idea to have a good look at your stage maps and if possible an OS map. Plenty of runners spend time in the minibuses poring over their stage maps, trying to memorize them.

The mile points on the maps are pretty accurate, so you can use them to judge your progress (and work out if you've gone wrong). The stages are well marked with arrows and sawdust - but don't worry if you don't see a marker for some time. The markers are only at places where you need to turn; if the route goes straight on, there won't be a marker. In the past, there has been some trouble with people removing markers or turning them round (their idea of a laugh!), so it's important for you to keep an idea of where you are and how far it should be to the next turn.

There are limited marshalling points along the course (marked H or M on your map). You can usually get water from the marshals. Our minibuses try to support each leg at least once (twice on longer legs); the drivers/navigators should be able to tell you where they plan to support before you start your run. But with marshalling duties, the differing paces of runners and complicated drives on narrow lanes, they might not get there in time to see you. There are a couple of stages that are especially difficult to support, and where you might want to carry a bottle (if you're running one of these stages you'll know this before you set off) but mostly it's not necessary. That said; on most stages you should be able to get water every 3-5 miles. If the weather is particularly hot, or you know you need to drink a lot on a run, you may want to take a bottle anyway.

There are toilets at the start/finish of some stages, but by no means all. Some are very rural and behind a handy tree can be the only place for your pre-stage preparation. Changing facilities are just as thin on the ground. The relay booklets, which you'll be given on Saturday morning, describe any facilities available. Talk to your drivers/navigator about finding a convenient loo stop before your stage, to avoid resorting to the tree option.

Each stage starts as a separate race. There is a large variation in the ability level of the teams: you could be up against Hugh Jones (ex London marathon winner) or Sonia O'Sullivan, but typically the longer and tougher the leg, the better the other runners. You can find that the field gets very spread out quickly. Also, don't assume that following another runner means that you're definitely on the right route - they might be a terrible map-reader!

## Saturday Night – The Hotel

We'll all be staying at the Holiday Inn Basildon. The address is Waterfront Walk, Festival Leisure Park, Basildon and the phone number is 0870 400 9003.

The rooms are reserved in the name of Serpentine Running Club.

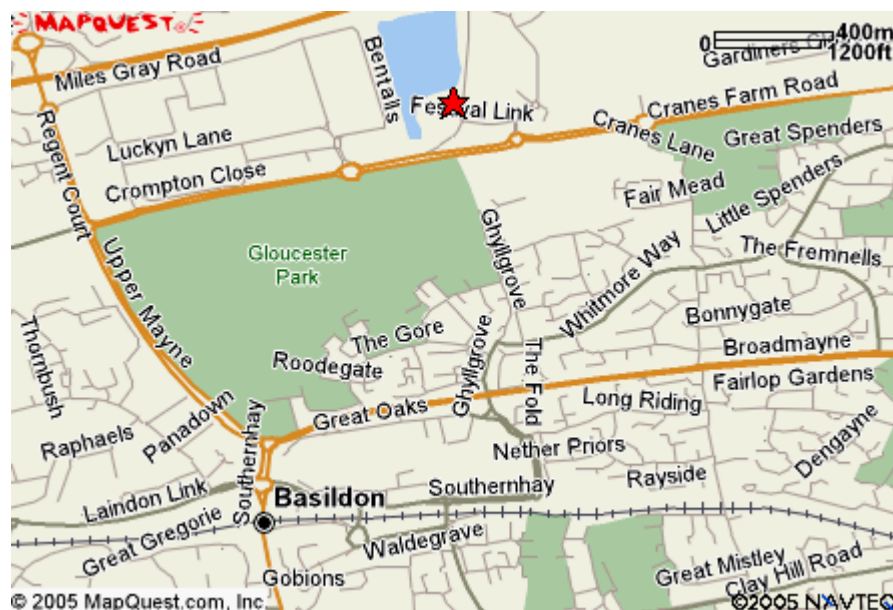
We have asked or will be asking you if you have a preference about who to share with. There'll be a room allocation list at reception and all the rooms are twins with private bathroom and tea/coffee making facilities.

The cost per room is £54 including breakfast (£27 per person). The hotel will provide a continental breakfast for anyone who needs to leave before 7 a.m. Dinner is a hot buffet, with veggie choices. You've already paid for this as part of your deposit n.b. drinks cost extra! The buffet will probably start at 7.30pm and go on until 10pm, but exact timings will be confirmed nearer to the time.

Hotel facilities include a bar and there's 24-hour room service available.

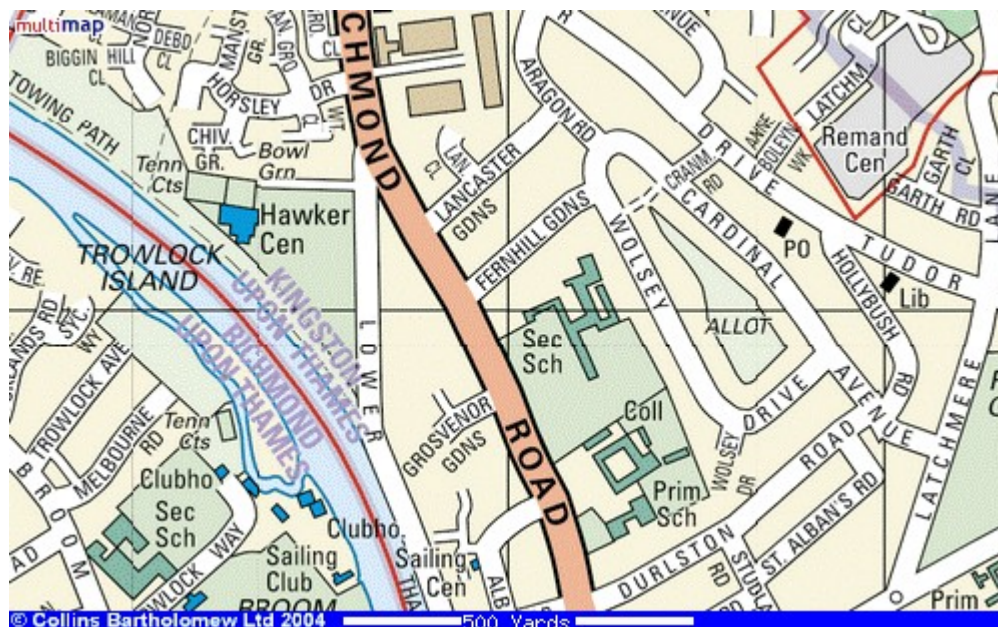
## Hotel Location

FROM EITHER THE A127 OR THE A13 TAKE THE BASILDON EXIT AND HEAD TOWARDS THE TOWN CENTRE. THEN FOLLOW THE BROWN TOURIST SIGNS TO FESTIVAL LEISURE PARK WHERE THE HOTEL IS SITUATED



## Sunday Afternoon – The Finish at the Hawker Centre, Kingston

We'll all end up at the Hawker Leisure Centre late on Sunday afternoon to watch the finish of the final stage and find out who's won the relay. The Hawker Centre has a bar, food and changing/showering facilities.



We'll all stay for the presentation of the prizes and after that the minibuses will return to Central London to drop people off. We'll try to drop all of you off in places that are as convenient as possible for you to get home from, but don't forget that our drivers have had a long weekend of driving, as well as running, and can't provide a personal taxi service. Before you leave the buses, do check that you've not left any of your belongings behind and try to get rid of any rubbish.