

Roadhog News

Climate Changeable

At time of writing, it seems like the good weather might finally be putting in more than a fleeting appearance. We seem to have gone from tights/jacket to short shorts/T-shirt, and back again several times this month. It is an irony that the Ashby 20, many people's prep race for London, should have been snowed off whereas the Marathon itself was the hottest for many years.

PBs Galore

The start of the road racing season in earnest has seen PBs tumbling like autumn leaves. The Town & Gown 10K saw all four of our entrants, Stevie, Janet, Aruna and Lee F set new marks. At the Belvoir HM, a quick course when the weather gods are smiling, Sam C made a stunning debut with Igor, Sam J (PB) and Richard G all joining him sub-91.

The Leicester 10K proved popular with members and Gurmit, Matt, Terry, Harry, Leah, Stevie, Janet and Lee F all lowered their PBs.

Parkrun Highlights

Milestones have included; Kathryn's 200th and Valerie, Marcus, Jeannette, Liz, Nathan, Emma and Harry's 50ths. James T and Harry continue to be our most ardent tourists but with new events being added every week, it won't be possible to emulate those football fans that commit to visiting every league ground. On the PB front, several members seem to be improving theirs on an almost weekly basis but a special mention goes to Nathan, who romped to his first sub-19 this week.



April 2018



Pure focus!

Spring Marathons

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SHORTS

Congratulations to ex-member Rae on her marriage to Anthony.

A big welcome to Matt, Duncan and Debra who have joined us recently.

Picture credits: Mike McSharry

Coach's Corner

Downhill Running

An oft neglected aspect of our sport is running downhill. In fell racing, strength and stamina will get you up the hills quickly but if you don't have the technique to descend rapidly, any advantage gained will soon evaporate. Before you stop reading, saying 'I'm not one of these crazy, brain out, fall down a mountain, fell runner types', I should point out that downhill running has major benefits for all runners. Many people are, quite naturally, a little scared of running downhill. This leads them to lean backwards and effectively, to put the brakes on. This wastes energy, scrubs off speed that could be used to gain time and places and adds to fatigue (and injury risk) by directing force straight up the legs.

The secret of downhill running (apart from conquering that fear) is to lean slightly forward, embrace gravity, and to increase cadence (leg speed/turnover). Our natural reflex response to avoid a stumble will help to ensure that the trailing knee comes through quick enough to keep us upright. Whilst the ability to run efficiently downhill will bring advantages in races, practising the technique yields far greater benefits. Running quicker is not just about training muscles; it is the nervous system that controls the precise sequence of muscle contractions that are required to run quickly and efficiently. Incorporating fast downhill running into your training helps you practise running with high cadence (which is necessary for faster running). If you practise a movement enough (and with speed), your nervous system will 're-wire' in order to reproduce it more efficiently. This means streamlining the path that the nerve impulses take and the speed with which they can be transmitted. The advantage of practising fast running on a down-slope is that it requires less energy than the flat, thus greater speeds can be achieved (and maintained for longer). The trick is not to use a slope that is too steep!

Brian's Bit

Oundle 20

The inaugural Oundle 20 was postponed from the 4th. March to the 25th. So instead of trudging through thick snow we had a glorious spring day and we all got more than tanned in the unexpected sunshine. This is a tough course; the gently undulating terrain was mentioned by the race organisers, but not the 4 mile hill between 7 and 11 miles, which just kept going up and up and up. I've not done Ashby so cannot compare, but it was hard and pretty lonely for the second 10 miles. There were absolutely no supporters anywhere.

208 started the race, 203 finished. My time was 3 hours 58 minutes 43 seconds and I came 184th. I was

also the first Over 70 male, but, whisper it quietly, the only over 70 male running!

Folkestone 10

In contrast with my 20-miler a week ago this race was a traffic-free, flat course, along the promenade from Hythe to Folkestone and back. It is always run on Good Friday, which means that the date varies from late March to late April, and the weather likely to be cool or warm. Last week at Oundle the Sun came out and warmed us as we toiled uphill, here the forecast had said it would not rain until the afternoon, but the rain hadn't read the prediction and it began as we waited to start and got heavier as the race progressed, with the wind in our faces on the way out. This was my twelfth running at Folkestone but I had never before encountered such horrible conditions as this year. Normally, there is a lot of support from casual spectators enjoying a pint in the sunshine or eating ice creams, but this year the prom was devoid of all but dog walkers getting in the way. However, the marshals, who were plentiful along the route, remained friendly and encouraging despite being cold and wet, they deserve special praise.

1st. Man Billy Hopper, Tunbridge Wells Harriers 57:23; 1st. Lady Maria Heslop Tonbridge AC 1:00:22

Brian Feldman 1:48:28 605th./671

Canterbury parkrun

A warning for all parkrun tourists – check the elevation of the course before you set off. I looked at the course description at Canterbury and it talked about running around a field a few times, then taking the path to the church a couple of times before the finish. I naively thought that it was going to be a fairly flat course. Ha,ha, there was no mention of the undulations on the path resulting in a total elevation of 237 feet, twice more than the total at Victoria Park! Next time I'm in Kent I shall stick to the Pegwell Bay parkrun which is pretty flat or the Deal run, due to open in August, which is flatter still.

This site is an interesting list of the elevation at each parkrun: <https://jegmar.com>

Spring Marathons

The spring season kicked off with the UK's quickest Marathon. Our two finishers produced remarkably similar times but were at opposite ends of the experience spectrum. For Aruna, it was her first Marathon and she put some quality training to good use by coming home in 4.04.43. For Jon (4.10.27), on the other hand, it was Marathon one hundred and something! Whilst these two were 'mad for it in Manc', Hilary was celebrating springtime in Paris with a time of 4.53.12 and Rob was in slightly less glamorous Suffolk

running the Bungay Marathon in a GFA 3.43.42.

Marathon Major master Kathryn battled the wind, rain and freezing temperatures of Boston (3.28.42) before jetting back to face a very different weather challenge in London. After training through a particularly poor winter it was really unfortunate for our runners that warmer weather should arrive in the capital just in time for race day. Those that have run it say that the effects of temperature seem amplified on the streets of the capital and it's fair to say that everyone struggled to a greater or lesser degree. Mark (3.22.23) had to abandon thoughts of the sub-3 he had trained for. James' almost nailed on PB went west as well but he still came home in a creditable 3.35.57. Kathryn's second Marathon in a week yielded a 3.42.36 and Igor settled for 3.44.15. Tim (4.18.36) and Hilary (4.58.34) also stayed the course.

We also had second claim interest in Brighton (Richard Curtis, 3.46.20) and London (Ludo, 2.44.47 and Dave P, 3.10.25).

Brian (6.17.54) chose an even hotter day for his first Marathon of the year, but as MK is only really part of his training for an ultra, he has the consolation that the extra time on his feet will have been very useful.

Desford 5

We simply couldn't have asked for better conditions; cool, sunny, light breeze and dry under foot. After a never-ending winter fit only for Snow Queens, it was wonderful to finally feel some spring-like sunshine. No debutants this week, but Martin, Aruna, Charlotte, Igor, Sam J and Tom were all making their first starts of the year.

Mark was away doing the Bedford 20 so it was left to Gurmit to lead us home. He didn't disappoint, with a fine 57th place and a time only just outside his PB, set on the faster Huncote course. He was followed by three guys who are all reaping the benefits of some structured training; Sam J, who smashed his PB, Igor and Sam C, who set an impressive benchmark in his first race over the distance. There was a bit of a gap after that but the rest of the counting eight packed well with Marc, Dave, Terry and Steve W finishing in close order.

The next pair were Tom and Andrew, the latter continuing the good form he showed at Stilton. Marcus was not at his best but the trademark eyeballs out finishing sprint was still there. Chris W showed im-



Gurmit leading the way

proved speed over his run at Stilton and Martin set a sensible pace in his first league race since 2015 and finished with a smile on his face, so job done.

Charlotte showed great form, getting her first Gold Standard of the year. She was ably backed up by Janet, who set a PB, and Julie, who grabbed a Silver Standard to complete the vets team. Aruna had bigger fish to fry with the Manchester Marathon on the horizon and was another one to pace with head rather than heart. Jeannette and Liz were our all-important fifth and sixth team counters.

Ladies: 18th Charlotte Wood 35.39, 89th Janet Hall 41.45, 116th Julie Dutton 42.59, 155th Aruna Bhagwan 45.09, 177th Jeannette Franklin 46.32, 225th Liz Butler 52.13 (260 finished).



Charlotte goes Gold



All smiles at the finish

Men: 57th Gurmit Singh 31.28, 71st Sam Jolly

32.19, 89th Igor Burbela 33.13, 97th Sam Crouchman 33.30, 156th Marc Draycott 35.47, 157th Dave Lodwick 35.46, 167th Terry Woodhouse 36.15, 168th Steve Wheeler 36.14, 201st Tom Martin 38.06, 202nd Andrew Fuller 38.15, 239th Marcus Shaikh 40.48, 258th Chris Willmott 42.23, 284th Martin Capell 45.09 (307 finished).

Teams: Vet Women 6/8 (Div 1), Women 6/8 (Div 2), Vet Men 3/12 (Div 3), Men 2/12 (Div 3), Mixed 6/8 (Div 1).

B Teams: Vet Women 10/10 (Div 1), Women 5/18 (Div 2), Vet Men 8/10 (Div 1), Men 6/10 (Div 1).