

Winter Newsletter

March 2006



Welcome to another edition of the South Cheshire Harriers Newsletter.

In this edition you will find the following items:

- Race Reports
- Harriers Club Champs Race Fixtures for 2006
- Marathon Hopefuls - their story so far
- Members Race/Training Stories Corner
- Running Tip of the Month

Race Reports

Village Bakery Half Marathon, Wrexham on 19th February

10 of our members attended the above event, which is held on a relatively flat fast rural course on the edge of the Wrexham Industrial Estate.



Rob Bonson was the first of our Harriers home to collect his well earned fruit loaf in 1:28:37. Hot on his heels was **Sheila Bickerton** in the tremendous time of 1:32:49 to win the Ladies 50-54 category and knock 4 minutes off the course record for that category.

Other race results include **Rob Cummings** 1:34:08; **Gareth Edwards** 1:34:26; **Dave McGrath** 1:37:50; **Mike Cutler** 1:38:23; **Martin Stirna** 1:41:50; **Helen Edwards** 1:46:09; **Shelagh Swinnerton** 1:54:17 and **Cindy Morrissette** 2:05:08

Congratulations also go to **Shelagh Swinnerton** for winning the Ladies 55-59 category. Helen and Cindy both chopped sizeable chunks of their PBs to make it a great day all round for our ladies.

Farndon 10K on 5th March 2006

Conditions underfoot were a little testing on parts of this course - which is in rural Cheshire close to the Welsh border - as there were still patches of snow and ice that had not thawed from an overnight snow fall. The course had also been altered from the flat straight course of last year to make a more scenic, but testing circuit. 11 of our members competed and

Andy Caunt claimed top spot for the Harriers finishing in 39:34, followed closely by **Rob Jones** who finished in 40:05.

Other race results include:

Robert Bonson 41:06;
Martin Stirna 53:20;
Shelagh Swinnerton 54:06;
John Ray Latham 55:59;
Cindy Morrissette 58:30;
Lizzy Marshall 62:21;
Anne Garnett 65:00 and
Rachel Prince 72:00.



Shelagh also claimed first prize in her age category. **Well Done!**

Cloud 9 Hill Race on 5th March 2006

Meanwhile, on the same day, a brave trio represented the club in gruelling Cloud 9 hill race – an off-road run up and down Bosley Cloud just outside Congleton.

Rob Cummings continued his fine vein of form by leading the Harriers home in 1:14:48 followed by **Charlie Rowland** in 1:20:49 and **Simon Walker** in 1:28:19.



Stafford 20 on 12th March 2006

The wintry weather conditions that we've had this March continued to make life difficult for our runners in this 20 mile race, which was the 2nd race in this year's NSRRA series. Although conditions underfoot were okay, the runners had to contend with running into a biting cold wind on the last 3 miles of each of the 3 laps that make up this testing course.

Despite this, **Mike Hatton** managed to complete the course in an excellent 2:02:06 – a pace just fractionally over 6 minutes per mile! This was good enough to place Mike 7th in the race and 2nd Veteran Man.

The other 4 club members to face up to the challenge at Stafford were **Dave McGrath** in 2:25:12; **Martin Stirna** 3:10:33; **Gael Earp** 3:14:08 and **Colin Earp** 3:14:13.



The Grizzly 20 Miles on 12th March

On the same day, four other club members took on the even more gruelling challenge of the Grizzly 20 mile race over a course of cliff paths, shingle beaches and bogs in Seaton, Devon.

John Swinnerton (in training for the London Marathon) was first Harrier home in 3 hours 17 mins, followed by **Simon Walker** 3:47, **Shelagh Swinnerton** 4:16 and **Mike Cutler** 4:27.

Obviously there are plenty of people out there who relish a tough challenge as this was ranked in the Top 5 races in the UK last year by Runners World. Perhaps, one of our 4 competitors can explain the attraction by doing a report on the race for the next newsletter.

Cindy Morrissette also went on the trip, but opted for the 8 mile Cub Race which she completed in 2 hours 4 mins. Our only Junior member, **Gemma Cutler** finished as second lady in the Hole-Axe 2K Challenge organised by the host club, Axe Valley Runners, on the Saturday.

Harriers Club Champs Fixtures '06

Here's a run down of the forthcoming Harriers Club Champs fixtures

19 Mar - Stafford Half Marathon

5 Apr (Wed) – Chester Spring 5 at Upton

9 Apr – Newcastle 7

23 Apr – Flora London Marathon

3 May – Clayton 10K

7 May – Uttoxeter Half Marathon

If you would like to take part in any of the above races then see Martin or Simon if you need entry forms.

Men's Harriers Champs 2006

Appropriately our Club Chairman, **Martin Stirna**, now leads this championship with 60.10% - if only by dint of being the only member to have run in all 5 races! **Rob Bonson** is 2nd with a score of 68.46% from 4 races and **Mike Hatton** is in 3rd place with a huge 81.99% having completed just 3 of the races.

Women's Harriers Champs 2006

Cindy Morrissette is still lying in first place with 56.00%, having completed 4 races, while **Shelagh Swinnerton** lies in 2nd place with 69.61% and **Helen Edwards** lies in 3rd post.

However.... with only five races gone and 25 still to go, the competition for both men and women is still wide open!

A plea from Simon Walker our Club Champ organiser : *Please can he have a list of all your PBs, along with the respective distances you achieved them in.*



SCH Organised Races

Easter Sunday 16 April – Air Products 10K Race & Easter Bunny 5K Fun Run

Sunday 21 May – South Cheshire 20 Miles Race

With just over a month to go before people make themselves sick with too many Easter eggs, SCH will be hosting its popular Air Products 10K Race and Easter Bunny 5K Race and a month later our South Cheshire 20 Mile Race.

In order for the races to run smoothly we need the support of our members on the day - either acting as marshals or manning the drinks stations.

If you can help, please contact Martin Stirna for further details.

Members' Racing/Training Stories

Marathon Hopeful – the story so far ...



The training is going well.

Martin plans the extra miles that we will do each Sunday for the weekly long run. We started at 10 miles back in January and gradually increased the mileage up to fifteen, then jumped to 19 miles a couple of weeks ago.

We have been pretty lucky with the weather.

Most of the runs have been out along the Trent & Mersey canal towpath from Elworth, taking in some back lanes (Extra Loops as Martin calls them), then making our way back along the old Salt Line. Dave Rowlands has been running with us most Sundays for about 12 miles and this has been really appreciated. We have also had his two sons who came along to support me - Rob and Charles.

It's nice to have support - not only to run with, but for help and advice on what to drink and what to eat as these are very important when running a marathon. It's been helpful just listening to their experiences of running a marathon and trying to take on board all that can happen and to learn not only from my own previous experience of running a marathon, but also theirs. I really do appreciate all the help and advice I am being given.

The club night runs have also been great training preparation as I've been using them to improve my speed. Again, all those other members have been so supportive - as always. It really is appreciated and it's helped me to relax. I am at present down to 15 miles for two weeks, while Martin does some races, then we're hoping to do one big run at the end of this month - around 22 miles. Then, the main part of the training will be done and it will be time to gradually ease down the mileage ready for the big day.

Martin, as always, has been marvellous - always planning the route to get in the required mileage - he never lets me down.

This is very important when you are training because it is a big thing to take on 26 miles. So, I will continue to do as I am told and keep the mileage up and do my best on the big day.

Sylvia Smallwood

*(Sylvia has said some very kind things about me in this article, but I get as much out of these sessions as she does. Her single-minded application to completing the task she has set herself is quite inspiring – not just to me, but I'm sure to many other members. **MARTIN**)*

If you have an interesting story to tell then please write in to Members Corner.

Thoughts from an Old Plodder at the Start of the Race Season

In this month's members' corner, **Anne Garnett** (who secretly loves races) has put pen to paper to tell us about why she took up running again.

Well here we are again at the start of another race season and I paused to ask myself why am I doing this? Quite honestly running has changed my life for the better and racing in particular is a thrill.

So I thought I might rationalise why, to encourage those of you who are new to the club to give it a go. The advantages of racing include:

- The thrill of participating with lots of other enthusiastic runners.
- The natural high you get at the end, which lasts all day.
- The camaraderie of meeting up with club members on the day and maybe having a drink or two afterwards.
- Going to new places that you may have never heard of before, such as Antrobus and Gawsorth!
- Discovering beautiful countryside that is on your doorstep.
- Raising money for charity.
- Starting your own medal collection and being the envy of your friends with stylish new T-shirts.
- Winning unusual prizes to add to your family's cuisine, such as cabbages and Christmas puddings.
- Seeing yourself in the Internet pictures the same evening.

As you can see there are so many positives to joining in and no negatives!! Don't let age put you off or speed. I'm both mature in years and hardly speedy. **JUST GO FOR IT!**

If you have an interesting story to tell then please write in to Members Corner.

Running Tip of the Month

Bill Ferguson (otherwise known as Billybadfoot) has written in with this month's hot running tip.

Homemade 'sports drink'



Here's a recipe for a homemade sports drink suitable for consuming during long(ish) training runs from 1 – 4 hours.

It is not perfectly isotonic, but can be varied to suit your taste and, as long as you don't make it too strong, will be absorbed more quickly than plain water or orange squash. It also has quite a high carb content so should help to stave off the 'wall'.

Mix 2 or 3 dessert spoonfuls of glucose with 200 ml of 'pure orange juice' (not orange squash). Add a pinch of salt and make up volume with water to 500 ml. The exact quantities can be varied to get a taste you like and I like to make it a bit weaker for longer runs

Once you've got yourself a box of glucose powder (from Boots) it's just as quick to make up as mixing a regular sports drink like Isostar, tastes a whole lot better and works out cheaper. Ideal for marathon training or long runs in the hills.

This tip was originally in one of the running magazines and I've been using it for more than 10 years (between injuries).

Tuesday Night Training Runs

Those of you who are new to the club may be unaware that the normal club Tuesday night training routine changes quite a bit every year after the clocks go forward at the end of March and we start to get light nights.

Although, the club continues to maintain a presence at the Oakley Centre, there is also a sizeable group of members that meet up in a different location every week to do an off-road run. The starting locations (usually a pub car park) are generally announced at the previous Thursday's club run from the Oakley, as well as being promoted on the club website (together with a map) and on the Club Noticeboard.

In addition to those runs organised mainly by the faster group, this year Martin also intends to organise some easier Tuesday night rural runs from various local locations in the South Cheshire area – such as Wheelock, Wybunbury, Weston, Acton and Elworth. These will all be within easy travelling distance from Crewe and dates and venues will be announced well in advance.

Even the Oakley Centre runs become more interesting at this time of the year as we get the chance to follow rural footpaths across the fields and can also take in local country lanes. So, roll on Spring, I bet you can't wait!

Fast Group, Slow Groupand now Intermediate Group

Club Members that train regularly at the Oakley will be aware that we tend to split into two distinct training groups – for want of a better term, the Fast Group and the Slow Group. The only problem is what do you do if you are too fast for the Slow Group, but struggle to keep up with the fast Group?

That problem will now be addressed with introduction of the Intermediate Group, led by **Simon Walker** and **Charlie Rowlands**. Sounds like just the thing for some of our faster ladies – and possibly also for any normal members of the Fast Group who are trying to return gently from injury.

Hash Run

Cindy has come up with another great way to mix the running and social side of the club – Hash Runs! Don't worry if you don't know what these are as Cindy will be organising an introductory one on Tuesday 18th April. I'm told that they involve following signs left along the route, that they cater for all members of the group – whatever their speed – and they invariably end up at the pub! What more do any of you need to know? Just the starting time and the venue, I guess, and these will publicised to everyone as soon as Cindy has decided on them.