



SOUTH CHESHIRE *Harriers* Newsletter

June 2009

The Peckforton 'Railway'



The 'Railway' at Peckforton Gap has always been a favourite challenge for the more ebullient members of the Harriers.

It doesn't look much from the bottom, but when the gradient reaches 45° (or more?), lungs, legs and mind begin to feel the strain; it's safer to go on than try to descend, and stopping is hardly an option without the aid of a rope and crampons.

But, why is it there? Apart from the obvious exceptions of Mike Hatton and Pete Mallison it's surely not a training route for engine drivers. And there is, co-incidentally, a direct connection between it and the lanes around the Harriers' home at the Vagrants. Read on...

In the 1930's the expansion in house building, including the domestic installation of baths and water closets, increased the use of water and obliged the Staffordshire Potteries Water Board (SPWB) to seek new sources of supply for the Potteries. For geological reasons these sources had

to be found outside the board's area and even outside the county.

In 1937 permission was obtained for the erection of pumping stations at Peckforton and Tower Wood in Cheshire, with a reservoir on Bulkeley Hill, whence the water would gravitate to a large storage reservoir at Cooper's Green near Audley, for distribution to Tunstall and the Potteries.

Most of these enterprises were held up by the Second World War.

By 1953 the Peckforton scheme and its linking aqueduct to Audley had been completed. There are two boreholes where water is pumped from the Sherwood Sandstone aquifer which is near to the surface: Close to the Coppermine Inn (three pumping stations) and at Peckforton Gap. There is a holding reservoir at the Gap, from where water is pumped up 110 metres to a covered reservoir on Bulkeley Hill at 210 metres above sea level. From there a 27 inch steel pipe feeds the water under gravity to the reservoir at Cooper's Green, Audley, 140 metres asl.

The infamous 'Railway' was actually a hauled tramway used in the construction of the Bulkeley Hill reservoir and water main, including a massive anti-surge valve at the top of the tramway. The climb up the track is approximately 105 metres of ascent.

The tramway is on the route of the main supplying the water to the Potteries. If you can still see through the red mist when you reach the top (or better still, approach on the more scenic path from Coppermine Lane and walk down a couple of yards from the top) there's a manhole cover and an air vent.



However, that's not our only link with SPWB. The water main runs across Cheshire, around the south of Nantwich and just to the south of the Vagrants' grounds. In your local summer evening runs you probably cross it more often than you ever realised.

Look out for concrete posts with a cast iron SPWB badge, which mark the route. The example on the right is at the top of Park Road in Nantwich. The main crosses the Weaver and runs up Park Road.

The picture below, showing the crossing of the old lagoons at the bottom of Park Road, gives some idea of the size of the pipe.

There are markers in Haymoor Green Road (and also an air vent marker) Wybunbury Lane, Stock Lane and on a footpath across Cockshades Farm.



The other end of the water main is close to another Harriers' favourite: on the route of the South Cheshire 20. Though not so severe as the Railway, the steep hill up Barthomley Road from Audley, at 12½ Miles, is just over 100 metres from the Cooper's Green reservoir.

They stole my thunder!

I have been trying for a couple of years to obtain information about the SPWB (now Severn Trent) facility at Peckforton.

After I wrote this, in March, I went back in May to check some details and was surprised to find a storyboard with some of the above details had been erected at the top of the tramway.

RogerFoden



Clockwise from top left:

Haymoor Green La, Haymoor Green La, Cockshades, Wybunbury La. and Stock La.



South Cheshire 20

10 MAY 2009



“there comes a time in every man’s life to put away childish things, step up to the plate and grasp the metaphor by the horns”



they aren’t that fussed about commemorative drinking bottles. My nice, shiny, new Virgin-branded squeazy bottles were largely overlooked until all the t-shirts and mugs left over from previous years had disappeared. (This sort of thing would get me fired on The Apprentice.)

Other events unfolded equally propitiously; the police turned up to help at the start; the weather was fine but not too hot; my voice didn’t go all squeaky and nervous when I had to address the runners; I only managed to accidentally turn off one of the four stopwatches we started; and I noticed in time for the prizegiving that we had Amy

Cope of Stone down as a man.

Furthermore, our athletes excelled in the race. A slightly punch drunk-looking Rich Baker was fourth overall; Nick Dunning ran a superb time that shows the huge progress he’s making lately; Carol Godfrey was second in the Over-35s and Martin won the Over-55s. In fact, I don’t think any of the Harriers had a bad run.

Where possible, I have always shirked responsibility. Instead, I have always been more inclined to stand on the sidelines and offer a wry running commentary on what everyone else is doing wrong. I find people thank you for it.

However, there comes a time in every man’s life to put away childish things, step up to the plate and grasp the metaphor by the horns. For me, that moment was the 2009 South Cheshire 20.

I inherited organisation of the race from Dave McGrath, which had two distinct advantages:

- 1) There was a template already in place, refined over five years of expert oversight;
- 2) If anything went wrong, I could blame Dave’s template.

I am happy to report that nothing went wrong and lots of things went more right than we might have hoped for. For a start, we had 197 entries, around double the 2008 entry and this, combined with the £500 sponsorship drummed up by Pete Mallison from his employers Virgin Trains, meant the race made (final accounts pending) something in the region of £700 or £800, which we will be donating to Virgin’s charity, CLIC Sargent.

Secondly, and in spite of the above, we did not run out of finishers’ mementos, an eventuality that had haunted my thoughts for days before the race.

In fact, I learned an important lesson about runners:



And our men won the team prize, including James Simpson, a man who had never trained over 10 miles on the basis, as I understand it, that his wife doesn’t think it’s safe.

This can’t be the place to thank everyone who helped on the day and for months beforehand; there are so many, space precludes it. I hope I have thanked people individually. There are several people who were and are unstinting and invaluable, and I hope I have told them as much.

South Cheshire 20 cont

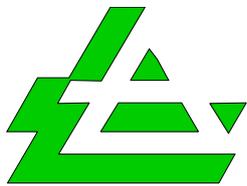


The feedback from entrants has been overwhelmingly positive; we clearly put on a good show and many stressed they will be back next year. A theme that ran through all their comments was the friendly, enthusiastic marshalling, which can be just as important as being pointed in the right direction, especially once you've done about 16 or 17 miles.

Paul Brownbill has an immense task to find and brief the many marshals we need for this race and it is an enormous credit to the club that people turned out in such numbers.

I will finish, if I may, with a song.
I'm being told that I may not. Thank you until next year.

Charlie Rowlands



Air Products 10K

EASTER SUNDAY 2009

New course, new challenges...

April 12 saw the first running of our annual 10k race on its new course. The sun shone, the organisation was superb and the runners turned out in their hundreds. Just don't mention those blasted GPS's to Alasdair.

Standing on my stepladders to start the race surveying 250 plus runners is a lonely and somewhat scary place. I'm immediately reminded how the odds are truly stacked against me.

Without race organisers, there are no races. And, without runners, there are no races either. So, it sort of makes sense for all of us to work together and to support each other. Most race organisers are or have been runners. However, most runners probably have never organised a race.

The part I dread the most about being a race organiser is the few days following a race. You know going into a race that you just cannot and will not please all the people all the time. No matter how well you think your event went, there will always be a few who simply just didn't have a good experience. Given today's easy and instantaneous way to communicate, the comments inevitably pour in.



If you don't have thick skin, you don't take this role on.

Constructive criticism is always welcome. It's even better when it comes with recommended and reasonable solutions to the stated problems. Are race organisers sometimes guilty as charged; of course! However, often complaints centre on areas the race organiser either had no control over or on a totally unexpected issue.

The biggest moan I received this year was speculation that the course was long and also unattractive. For the former we can debate until the sun sets on the accuracy of GPS, but measuring a course accurately for certification comes down to a steel tape and a lot of time and effort from the course measurer.

Introducing a new course this year meant a number of long weekend days were spent on calibrating,

Air products 10K cont

measuring and re-measuring the route. Despite all the care and attention, it appears there was an as yet unexplained discrepancy: rest assured this will be put right for next year.

As for the attractiveness of the course, I had set myself a number of goals in moving the course from its previous location. Firstly to find a course that would be attractive to all levels of runners: from those chasing fast PBs to those attempting their first race. Safety was also a priority, and the fact that at least 75% of this course could be run on wide pavements was a significant plus. Car parking and suitable facilities is another big requirement and MMU ticked the majority of boxes here.



On the downside, part of the course is run through an industrial estate, but then again I can think of very few urban races which do not have some unattractive parts, for example the last few miles of Helena Tipping 10K. As one of our members aptly pointed out: if you want an attractive course then run our 20 miler or Halloween Hellraiser. So in my book the positives outweighed the negatives.

Invariably on the outside looking in, things seem to look a lot easier than they are. With a new course, I had to start everything from scratch which took over six months from identifying the course, seeking permissions, obtaining the facilities etc. etc.

At this point, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all those who helped and supported me directly or indirectly – without you, it would not have been possible. Particularly to my long suffering wife and my youngest daughter who was out on the

course at 6:30am on Easter Sunday morning helping me put out course signs. A particular mention also to Phil Cliff, who because of car problems cycled eight miles carrying a whiteboard! This is the degree of selflessness and dedication that I think makes our club so special.



So, how did it go overall?

Nearly 400 runners across the two races: the highest number of entries ever. Together with the beautiful weather, wonderful marshals and even a band, I think overall I can say it was a success. Yes some teething problems, but those can be easily put right for next year.

And will I be doing this next year?

Well yes, of course. I want to see this race become a major part of both the Staffs and Cheshire race calendars. It is a real opportunity for the best runners of both counties to compete against each other, and also be seen as a safe and friendly race for new runners. Even with all the challenges, organising this race is a labour of love for me. Where else can one have a vision, create something from nothing, inspire and encourage people to set a goal to participate and then reap the emotional benefits of seeing hundreds of people going home feeling good about themselves?

I don't think it gets any better than that.

Alasdair Dyde

Ladies 5K Forest Park

1ST JULY 2009

“... no hills, no traffic - and no men!”



This event will definitely appeal to ladies who have previously run 5K Race for Life, with the added bonus of not having to collect sponsor money.

The race is mostly traffic free on parkland paths, so is a reasonably scenic course. Some of us ran it last year and afterwards celebrated with a picnic and well-earned glass of vino (which we permitted men to attend) and we will continue this again this year. Note, there is also a team prize so for those of you who do feel competitive, it offers a real opportunity for us to continue our current winning ways. So come on, let's show the men what we can do,

and for a change, make them do the supporting (which, to be fair, they did do last year.)

Entry forms and on-line entries are available via: <http://www.spectrumstriders.org.uk/races/ladies5k/index.htm>

If you don't have access to site let me know, as I have some printed entry forms which I'll bring along on training nights. Please let me know if you are interested in running this race.

Sarah Dyde

Some of you will be aware that we ladies have a 5K race all to ourselves which counts towards club championships.

It's on Wednesday evening, 1st July at Forest Park at Birchwood, just off the M62 near Warrington; a single circuit round the park on tarmac path: no hills, no traffic - and no men!

From a low-key start in 1993, the Forest Park Ladies 5K has steadily grown in popularity, with more than 100 finishers most years. It began as a way of encouraging more local women to take up running and now the event attracts club runners from across the region.

The race is popular with all ranges of abilities and particularly those who have not raced before. There is no pressure to be a speed-demon, as you'll see from the wide range of finishing times, from under 18 mins to over 50 mins. A lovely bunch of flowers is given to all finishers.





Spectrum Striders Running Club



invite

LADY RUNNERS

to run the

The 17th FOREST PARK 5 Km

on

Wednesday, 1st July 2009

at

Birchwood Forest Park, Gorse Covert, Birchwood, Warrington

Starting at 7.30pm



Run under UKA rules - Licence 20090130 - Minimum age 13 years
An accurately measured traffic-free course on good paths through parkland

Prizes to first 3 finishers and first team (3 to count)

Prize categories: Junior, Senior, Over 35, Over 40, Over 45, Over 50, Over 55, Over 60

Flowers to all finishers

Changing rooms, showers and ample car parking in Birchwood Forest Park

(One mile from M62 Junction 11)

Entry fees: £5.50 affiliated, £7.50 unaffiliated (£1.00 extra on the day)

Cheques payable to Spectrum Striders Running Club and include a 52p Stamped Addressed Envelope

Send entries to: Forest Park 5 Km, 2 Wigmore Close, Gorse Covert, Warrington WA3 6UN

Telephone enquiries: 01925 828290

Or ON-LINE via Spectrum Striders' website at: www.spectrumstriders.org.uk

Closing date for receipt of postal entries: 24th June 2009

225 Entries
in 2005

All
abilities
finishing
from
17min 24s
to
40 mins

ENTRY FORM - LADIES ONLY

Surname: _____ First name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone no.: _____

UKA Affiliated Club (if any): _____

England Athletics Registration No: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Age group on 1/7/2009 (please tick): 13-19 [20-34 [35-39 [40-44 [45-49 [50-54 [55-59 [Over 60 [

Entry fee enclosed : £ _____ and Stamped Addressed Envelope.

I declare that I am an amateur as defined by UKA rules. I am medically fit to take part and I accept that the organisers will not be responsible for any, loss, damage, illness or injury sustained as a result of taking part in the race.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please remember your Stamped Addressed Envelope – or a 60p surcharge will be made for your number

Edinburgh Marathon

SUNDAY 31 MAY, 2009

At the end of May, Kedren Elliott took on her first marathon in the midst of an Edinburgh heatwave. Mind you, the dehydration didn't seem to affect her too badly. It seems the main stress of a debut marathon is knowing where the nearest loo is...

Having spent one and a half very enjoyable sunny days in Edinburgh, I was informed by the locals that it couldn't be so hot on the day of the race because the good weather would never last that long. While it may have been a degree or two cooler, it was still a scorcher!

The race started at 9am so it was up early to consume the two pots of rice pudding and bananas purchased the night before, washed down with a nice cup of coffee and plenty of water.

Six trips to the loo later and we'd left the hotel to walk to the start. Just as we arrived to join the crowds I got a call from fellow Harrier Steve Whincup (Winky) and asked where he was – only to turn round and see him standing behind us.

After Matthew (the other half, and chief photographer) had taken our picture and headed off to make his way to mile 16, we started to join the crowds. Winky handed his bag into the luggage trucks and we went to find the loo (cleverly using a local hotel to avoid the incredible queues at the race loos).

Winky and I then went our separate ways to find the zones we were to start off in. I just got in the yellow pen before organisers announced they were closed. Only 15 minutes now to the start.

I don't know why, but I didn't feel as nervous as I did at the Great North Run, maybe because I had no idea how the race would pan out. I didn't know whether I would hit a wall at some point, and I'd never actually run further than 16 miles. How hot would it get? Would I be able to drop out if I wanted to? I decided all I was going to focus on was getting to mile 16 which I knew I could do and seeing Matthew.

The atmosphere was very different to the Great North Run - people were stretching, and not talking as much. When the man on the public address tried to rouse us with shouts like: "Come on Edinburgh, lets hear those screams!" there wasn't much response - I think everyone was too preoccupied. It didn't help that he kept banging on about it being a lovely sunny day. Yes, we know!

Finally 9 o'clock came and – without hearing the



starter's signal - we found ourselves walking forward, then easing into a jog. My highs and lows of the 26.2 miles included:

Miles 1-5: Running along the sea front and getting a bit of a breeze.

Mile 10: seeing Matthew and still feeling good, (although wondering what was the incentive to get to mile 16 now!)

Mile 10-13: looking for a loo. Again. Seeing the lead runners coming the other way.

Mile 13: quick trip to the bushes and hearing some poor lady struggling with her running shorts. Keeping an eye out for Winky running the other way but not seeing him!

Mile 16: being passed at the top of a hill by a runner with one leg. Overtaking Captain America, briefly.

Mile 18: being high fived by a huge teddy bear running the other way!

Mile 20-26: passing every single mile marker!

Mile 23: seeing a lady gipping up at the side of the road.

Mile 26.2: crossing the finish line in one piece.

Edinburgh Marathon cont

Overall, the experience was great and once I'd reached 24 miles I was determined to run the last two to the finish line. I did stop a number of times after mile 16, but I do think that with more training and slightly more helpful weather conditions, I can better my finishing time of 4:49:48.

It hasn't put me off and, now I know I can do a marathon, I am certainly going to do another - the Loch Ness marathon, looms in October. After experiencing one extreme of the Scottish climate in Edinburgh, however, I just hope it isn't too cold.

In the meantime, now that my injury seems to have cleared up (touch wood), I have some club championship and NSRRA races to catch up on!

Kedren Elliott

Congratulations to Kedren and all the Harriers who have completed marathons so far this year:

Rich Baker at Blackpool;

Pete Marquis-Jones, Pat Hudson, Colin Simpson, Dave McGrath, John Booth, Anthony Hadfield, Steve Dawson, Andy Painter, Martin Stirna, Alasdair Dyde and Jeanette Hatton at London;

Simon Walker and Lorna Fewtrell at Windermere;

and Winky, who managed an injury-affected 4:40 in the Edinburgh heat.

How not to run the London Marathon

A successful marathon requires determination, dedication and a bit of luck on the day. Here, Pat Hudson describes his dedication and determination.

Having 'accidentally' got into the London Marathon this year I thought I'd better make a good show of myself.

A 16-week programme was drawn-up with expert advice from a well known running book. I decided I'd be delighted with sub-3 hours so (to add a little scope for things to go wrong) a 2h 50min plan was selected; all I had to do was to complete this program and I would be on course for a 2h 50min marathon.

I duly followed that plan to the letter: 70-mile weeks, over 900 miles of training between New Year and April 26th, and my now legendary 42-lap track sessions. Even a bout of plantar fasciitis was fairly quickly brought under control (it pays to have the forethought to marry a physiotherapist!)

The benefit of this conviction to training is that your general running is dragged, by the scruff of its neck, to the next level. During this period my half marathon PB reduced by 23mins and my 2h 10min 20-mile time was 20mins better than the previous year's target (I didn't even manage to finish Stafford 20 in 2008).

For all this training, I managed to miss my three-hour target by a little over 11 minutes. I am only now beginning to come to terms with just how undismal this time actually is. The effort you need to put in (there's always an exception, Anthony) means it becomes a large focus of your running, and frankly

your life, for the months building up to the big day. But I'm not the first, and won't be the last, to miss my target when it comes to the marathon distance. Of the 12 Harriers that started London, four would describe their own performance as disappointing.

The weekend itself started with pasta at Il-Fornello (with some of the 'successful' Harriers not looking unduly concerned about the marathon distance).



The day itself was a glorious morning, (maybe too glorious) and all the blue-start Harriers massed together until Mike Hatton had to go to the "VIP" area. My race went exactly to plan, running to 6:30 pace with Pete Marquis-Jones, collecting extra gels

London Marathon cont

at 14 miles, and all good right up to mile 16 where my pace began to drop. This was the last I would see of Pete.

At mile 21, I met Beth and the rest of my support crew, easy to spot as they were nestled beneath one of our giant blue SCH banners (see Charlie, they are useful!), for my final gel. At this point I knew I was struggling; my pace had dropped by nearly a minute a mile. At mile 23, my trusty-ish Garmin let me know I had fallen to exactly 3-hour pace, but I had a quick word with myself and accelerated back up to the 6:53/mile pace.

A hundred metres later I was standing at the side of the road wondering how I to simultaneously stretch both the front and back of my cramping legs. It was at this point I knew my target time was gone, and after this it was a frustrating cycle of jog-walk-stretch for the last three miles. With crowds five or six deep all the way to The Mall, there's nowhere to hide. At this point I began to regret having my name printed on my vest, as thousands of people tried to help - "Come on, Pat", "You can do it Pat" - when all I really wanted was a large hole to jump into.

The only plus-point for me that day was the evening - another great SCH social event. This time I was

very much making up for lost beer-time, but I do remember the Thai meal was very good!

So what's next? What do I need to do to get that elusive three-hour marathon? Some of the club's best runners have suggested maybe I need longer long-runs in my training. Anything up to 30+ miles has been suggested, a prospect that does not fill me with a great deal of joy.

But if you're reading this and it's putting you off trying the marathon distance, don't let it: some of the South Cheshire 12 haven't stopped smiling since, and all of us who were disappointed will try again!

Pat Hudson



Dates for your diary

For more details on any of the below, check the club website or forum, or ask a member of the committee. We will also be advertising forthcoming events on the club noticeboard at the Vagrants.

Thursday, 2 July: Joint run from the Vagrants with Whitchurch Whippets, followed by one of our fabled Chip Butty Nights. Meet new people, have a run and eat chip butties. An earthly paradise!

Friday, 3 July: Carol Godfrey is organising a meal for any runners and family who fancy it, at the Rising Sun on Middlewich Road. Please see Carol for more details, or check the forum in due course.

Thursday, 6 August: the second in what we hope will become a monthly curry night. First Thursday in the month, at 8.30pm after training. Venue tbc, but likely to be Natraj (by Nantwich railway station).

Sunday, 20 September – End of Summer Run. This will be a chance for as many members as possible, of all speeds, to have a relaxing run together,

with the emphasis very much on the social side. Location tbc.

Sunday, 25 October – Halloween Hellraiser. The newest of our trio of SCH-organised races, an off-road adventure with plenty of opportunity to get muddy. Come and run or help us put on a good show to match last year's very popular debut. Ask Mike Cutler, or committee members, for details.

If you have any good ideas for future newsletters, or would like to write something about your own running, please contact
charles.rowlands@gmail.com

We are very happy to receive articles, and it's so much nicer than having to torture people to make them do it, so please don't be shy. The next newsletter will come out in the first week of August, so all contributions need to be submitted by July 31.

If you – or other members you know – would prefer to have a paper copy of the newsletter delivered, please let us know via the same email address, including your full address of course.