



# SOUTH CHESHIRE Harriers Newsletter

November 2009

## Halloween Hellraiser

**The second running of the Harriers' autumn multi-terrain event took place at the end of October.**

Much preparation had gone in: Phil Cliff had covered the Cheshire countryside with over 130 direction arrows he had made himself, while Mike Hatton had a mini army of marshals around the course, but boasted proudly, having recced the course at first light, that if necessary it could be run without a marshal.

*(Don't tell the marshals that – Ed.)*

Thankfully memories of the electric fences that had mysteriously appeared in the previous few days, the jungle of maize obliterating the footpath near Stapeley, and predictions of fire, tempest and destruction from the neighbours near Hough quarries were things of the past. Everybody had played their part in the preparation, and Nicky Lowe's assurances that "Don't worry Mike, I've sorted it with the farmer's wife while I was in the Co-op" were especially welcome.

And so to the race. Technical expertise on hire from Bentley Motors – namely Pat Hudson – beavered away at getting a reluctant generator to work, while the first trickle of cars at the Vagrants soon became a torrent, and you realised: this is it.

The one-mile fun run was a great success. About two dozen enthusiastic youngsters, along with the occasional supporting adult, set off from the bridge behind the Horseshoe pub. Gemma Cutler had ensured the marshals were in position around the route through Willaston, all decked in appropriately scary attire. Everybody got back safe and sound through

the Grim Reaper finish barrier, which was billowing in the wind.

Straight over then to the start of the main race. A quick risk assessment talk, in which the words 'stiles' and 'care' seemed to predominate, a cheery smile from Bryan Dale before he dashed off to photograph the runners en route, a blast of the starting siren, and 144 competitors took off down Haymoor Green Road. Dave Mansbridge from Telford AC established a decent lead before the runners appeared at Annions Lane.

By the drinks station behind Wybunbury Church, Dave had stretched his lead, but Neil Jones and James Simpson were heading the Harriers contingent with other familiar colours from Vale Royal and West Cheshire behind them in the mix. By now the effects of the maize field, stiles and footpaths was kicking in and the effort of the climb up Cobbs Lane and the quarries was showing on runners' faces.

A course of nearly nine miles meant the runners were well stretched out entering the final fields at Willaston. The last thing anyone needed was the sight of a herd of frisky bullocks hell bent on destruction.



*Original image: Bryan Dale*

The stoic efforts of Pat the previous day had come to nil – the red and white tape he had assured the farmer was biodegradable (the farmer invited him to eat it) had largely disappeared, while the direction arrows had become mutilated bovine skateboards.

Time for action. Turning from organiser to cattle rancher, I tried encouraging the cows into a neighbouring field where they could exercise their curiosity without causing chaos. This was a successful mission apart from one brave little so-and-so who required a further reminder of his duty to give way to runners; I'm sure he had the word 'Neil' stamped on his backside.

Across the finish line, (Alasdair having given up the battle to keep the Grim Reaper upright in the wind), Dave Mansbridge completed the course in just over 55 minutes, retaining the title for Telford AC.

South Cheshire meanwhile won both the men's and women's team prizes, and even the odd witch or two made it round, thanks to Michelle Haigh & Co

(Michelle, pictured on the front cover, No. 213, has since started running at the club). The race was rounded off by the sight of Kathy Ling of Wrekin coming in with Clive Holland who again acted as sweeper and to whom I am very grateful.

A thumbs-up was received from the local police, who had done a great job, from the Red Cross, and from race referee John Clemens of Stone Master Marathoners. This really was a team effort which was summed up by Bryan Dale on his website as **"A super race put on by an even more super club"**.

100% up in the fun run; 50% up in the main race. What might it be next year? Thank you everybody.

*Mike Cutler*

**Ed's note:** *The club's thanks to Mike and Gemma for their tireless efforts putting the whole race together, organising prizes and much, much more.*

## Alan's Run

**F**or the uninitiated, Alan's Run is not actually a run at all. It's a meal and a drink to celebrate another year of our Tuesday night off-road runs.

(To be initiated, nothing is involved other than turning up on a Tuesday night between March and October and running over a few hills and fields -



Dave (left) presents the trophy to Andy

venues are announced week by week on the club website.)

This year, on Friday 20th November, we had the better part of 30 people at the Nag's Head in Wheelock, where a

further annual tradition was enacted, as Dave Hindley handed on the coveted 'John Booth Trophy', awarded for outstanding accomplishment in the field off off-road running. Or just in any field.



Alan, John and the John Booth Trophy

This year's recipient, decided by previous holder Dave, was Andy Painter, who has impressed everyone on Dave's Bob Graham Round training runs with his smooth, easy, unruffled style (in fact, he ran so well this year it's difficult to understand how he came as low as fourth in the Off Road Champs - must have been some real quality in front of him!).

## Air Products 10K & South Cheshire 20

**Dates have been set for our races in 2010.**

The 10K will take place as usual on Easter Sunday, 4th April. Of all the races we put on, this attracts the biggest entry and Alasdair Dyde will be looking for lots of help on the day and in advance.

The South Cheshire 20 will be held three weeks later on London Marathon day, 25 April. This year's race raised £1,000 for children's cancer charity CLIC Sargent, and we have received 'Thank you's' from the charity and a letter of congratulations from Crewe & Nantwich MP Edward Timpson. So thank you in turn to everyone for their wonderful efforts at this and all our races in 2009

# When 'too slow' is just the right pace

## ASHBOURNE HALF MARATHON, SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

**A**fter enjoying a summer of running Staffordshire Moorlands' Summer Series of weekly races in the Peak District, I thought a 'swift half' wouldn't be too difficult.

**What a rude awakening! This was the most challenging race I've taken part in... so far.**

Andy and I arrived at the start with plenty of time to spare. We bumped into a couple we'd met at the Summer Series and Lucinda and I found our start position towards the back, whilst the men moved further up the field.

Chatting to a couple of blokes before the start gun, I received the advice: 'if you think you're going too slow then you're doing just fine'.

With this in mind I started the first uphill mile at an easy pace. Other runners came past me but I was feeling good and strong. Then, as we approached the first summit, I took a look behind me and saw the safety bike hard on my heels. Too slow a start!

I picked up my pace a bit, covering ground and picking off people steadily for the next mile until one gentleman said to me: 'You want to slow down for the next bit.'

I decided this man probably knew what he was talking about and so fell into step with him. My companion, Derrick Wallis, ran with Stone Master Marathoners originally but is now with Ashbourne Running Club. He talked me through the next six miles, up hills, down steep roads and around sharp bends and he was fantastic to run with.

Nevertheless, at mile eight, after the last gruelling hill up to Blore crossroads, I decided I knew better after all, and that I needed to go faster if I was to beat my only other time of 2:04 for the distance. Derrick and I parted company with his words ringing in my ears: 'Don't go too fast - the last two miles are long and monotonous', and I sailed off down into Okeover.

Again, picking off people one by one, I felt that not only was a PB possible, but a time under two hours too!



Then I hit the last couple of miles: boy, was Derrick right! My pace slowed and there was no one ahead for me to chase.

I trudged through the main street in Ashbourne with Sunday visitors gawping at my pathetic state. A few cheered me on, but many crossed the road and kept firmly hold of their children!

With a few hundred metres left, I saw Andy ready to give me that last bit of encouragement that I needed. Two hours had long passed and 2:04 was fast approaching. The entrance to the sports field was in sight but I knew there was a short lap to be done before the finish line.

Then, I heard someone running behind me and a sage voice said: 'Went too fast then?'

With Derrick's encouragement, I finished the last lap and crossed the line in 2:05:30.

Not bad really, it's an undulating route, but perhaps if I'd listened to Derrick ...

*Liz Painter*

### Footnote:

I've since completed the Sandstone Trail... that is **definitely** the hardest race I've done so far!

### Editor's PS:

*Andy, who didn't have Derrick to slow him down, finished in 1:39:06*

# Sandstone Trail Race, 4 October 2009

## LAST CHANCES, AND STRANGE DIVERSIONS

**T**his year's Sandstone Trail Race - a hilly 17.1 mile trail run from Duckington to Delamere Forest - saw a bigger than usual Harriers entry, it being the last chance to get a qualifying long run under your belt in the club's inaugural off-road championships.

The spur of failing to get a long run in was not enough for everyone, however. After putting in the hard yards over the season in the shorter events, Phil Cliff was thwarted by injury in the weeks before the race and had to content himself with lobbying for a rules change for next season. Meanwhile, James Simpson was thwarted only by a lack of intestinal fortitude, surrendering a handsome position in the standings on the grounds (and I paraphrase) that he just wasn't man enough.

And so to the event. With what less sympathetic souls might call depressing inevitability, remorseless pot-hunter Mike Hatton was first Harrier home (in a very impressive 7th place overall) to guarantee himself top spot in the champs, but behind Mike something akin to the Wacky Races was going on.

First to start behaving strangely was Rich Baker, whose studious appearance and nerdy car designing job belie a man incapable of following simple way-markers. He evidently decided 17.1 miles was an insufficient challenge, and took a detour to inspect the candle factory at Burwardsley. While he was otherwise occupied, the rest of us slipped past, with Pat Hudson now Mike's closest pursuer. But Rich was not the only one with a hankering after a spot of unscheduled tourism: as Nicky Lowe and I passed the front of Beeston Castle, who should appear in front of us, apparently exiting from the gift shop, but Pat. I believe the customary euphemism employed during tennis matches is 'a comfort break'.

Photo: Andrew Williams/Inspiring Images



For the next several miles, Pat kept Nicky and me company (this is only a figure of speech) until I surprised myself by realising I was going to have to push on and drop Nicky if I wanted to get my



Pat, Nicky and Charlie above Wharton's Lock  
Photo: John Street

best possible time. Unbe-known to me, I was now second only to Mike among the SCH contingent (while Nicky was in fact leading the entire ladies' field). Somewhere behind us though, Rich Baker was causing a series of double-takes among other Harriers as he overtook them trying to make up the ground he had so carelessly lost.

At last, he got close enough that Pat caught sight of him. Cue further pandemonium as Pat came flashing past me like a scalded cat that had suddenly realised it could beat Rich Baker to 24 points. Meanwhile Rich, perhaps now paying the price for trying to recover his mistake, wilted and failed to overhaul Pat, me or Nicky. Sadly for Nicky, she couldn't quite hang on to first place in the ladies' race, but 2nd in 2.21 is a fantastic effort for her first go at this race. Barring mishap, she'll win it next year.

She was not the only female Harrier to impress either, with Liz Painter and Lorna Fewtrell both getting to grips with what is a formidable challenge. In fact for Lorna, the race distance was about the same distance as she had managed in training in the preceding six weeks combined.

This is a wonderful event - tough but genuinely rewarding, and if you fancy something new next year, I urge you to give it a try. If you don't feel ready for the full 17 miles, there is a 10 mile B race starting near Beeston Castle, which offers a more gentle introduction.

### Results:

Mike Hatton 2:01:37	Pat Hudson 2:17:15
Charlie Rowlands 2:18:45	Nicky Lowe 2:21:26
Rich Baker 2:21:55	Andy Painter 2:26:41
Rob Rowlands 2:27:47	Dave McGrath 2:29:41
Liz Painter 3:13:22	Lorna Fewtrell 3:27:56

Charlie Rowlands

## Champions, off-road and on

**T**he Harriers' inaugural 'Running Bear Off-Road Championships' concluded in the mud of Stafford Common on 14 November, with the most significant performance - in terms of the Club Champs - being Rich Baker's decision to race the Preston 10 the next day instead. This allowed Pat Hudson to pick up a hard-earned second place behind a maximum-points-scoring Mike Hatton, and Charlie Rowlands to pick up a, well, let's say hard wished-for third place.

In the women's event, Nicky Lowe mirrored Mike and picked up maximum points, but Lorna Fewtrell pushed her hard, capitalised whenever Nicky was absent, and ended up just two points behind. Liz Painter, who has become quite the off-road demon this year, was third.

This was the first year of the off-road champs, and 35 men and 15 women competed in at least one event, although only those listed below did enough events to qualify. Steve Whincup is currently putting together a race calendar for 2010, so if you have any thoughts no doubt he'd be glad to hear them. In the meantime, many thanks to Steve for originating and organising this.

### Running Bear Off-Road Champs Final Standings

#### Men

		Points
1	Mike Hatton	150
2	Pat Hudson	141
3	Charlie Rowlands	126
4	Andy Painter	116
5	Steve Whincup	95

#### Ladies

		Points
1	Nicky Lowe	100
2	Lorna Fewtrell	98
3	Liz Painter	93

**O**n the road, meanwhile, there are two events left, the Cheddleton 10K on Saturday 28 November and the Helena Tipping 10K on Sunday 6 December.

Even so, Mike with 83.58% and Nicky (74.71%) look unassailable in the road-running competition too.

Ivor Twiss could be Mike's biggest challenger next year. His 78.58% makes him favourite to hold off Neil Jones (77.07%) and Mel Cole (75%) for second place.

Gill Gibbons guarantees one new face in the ladies' top three with her excellent 68.97%, while Sarah Dyde (57.12%) should take third place, unless another newcomer Sue Allcock (61.04% from six races) completes both remaining races.

All to play for there!

Mike in action at  
Stafford XC and  
Nicky at  
ParkHall XC



Photos  
Bryan Dale

## Diary Dates

### SCH CURRY NIGHTS

**W**e have recently instituted a monthly Harriers Curry Night, held on the first Thursday of the month, unless for some reason it can't be! So far we have tried a couple of curry houses in Nantwich and our next evening is:

**Thursday 3 December** - when the meal will be at **Indian Heaven in Alsager**.

That evening we will also be having a run round Alsager to work up an appetite (normal training will still take place from the Vagrants). This will potentially be a chance for some people to sample a bit of the Alsager 5 course if you're planning on running that at the start of February; also, assuming the weather isn't too forbidding, there will be the option of an off-road run.

Gather in the car-park of The Lodge pub, to run at

7pm. The meal will be booked for 8:30 for those who wish to skip the run.

Let Charlie Rowlands know if you would like to attend; final details nearer the time.

If you would like to suggest a venue (whether for the standard of its cuisine or its proximity to your own front door) for future meetings, don't be shy.

**These evenings are very much open to all; please don't feel it's a 'lads only' affair.**



### MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Friday 11 December** - Ladies' Night. A ladies-only social. Details tbc; contact Sarah Dyde.

**Tuesday 15 December** - Christmas Handicap Run. Organised by Pat Hudson, but nevertheless a resounding success on its first running last year. From the Vagrants; staggered starts according to ability; your chance to beat the big-shots!

**Sunday 3 January** - New Year Run. A choice of routes for faster and slower groups; most likely on part of the Sandstone Trail; pub lunch afterwards (optional!)

**Friday 29 January** - Annual Dinner and Awards. Taking place at Crewe Golf Club. Not to be missed! Tickets and details to be confirmed.

### RACE DIARY

**Saturday 9 January** - Cheshire Cross Country Champs, Reaseheath. We are joint hosts. Come and run, or come and help.

**Saturday 23 January** - Northern Cross Country Champs, at Blackburn.

**Saturday 27 February** - National Cross Country Champs, Leeds.

Note: you do not need to qualify to run any of these; just let Mike Hatton know if you would like to.

**Sunday 7 February** - Alsager 5. The past two years at least we have set record turn-outs at this race, with nearly 40 runners in 2009. Can we make it 50 in 2010? If you're new to racing, the race is local, short, flat, and so popular it is guaranteed to be packed with runners slower than you. It is also the first race in the North Staffs Road Runners Association calendar.

## the Bob Graham Round

**B**ack in August, after one postponement caused by a key support runner hurling himself off his bicycle at reckless speed, (was, as has been suggested, Boot trying to avoid Bob Graham duty?) Dave Hindley made his first attempt to add his name to the roll call of South Cheshire Harriers who have completed the formidable 24-hour Lakeland challenge known as the Bob Graham Round.



Pre-start in Keswick; Dave with John Booth & Matt

Alas, as the photos attest, the weather was more fitting to late November than high summer. Dave emerged from the first leg of the route taking 5 hours; an hour behind

schedule and rather battered by the elements. After then dragging himself through the second leg in weather at least as bad, Dave finally surrendered to the inevitable halfway around leg three. Not to be so easily beaten, Dave has set a date for his next attempt - the weekend of 30 April/1 May 2010 - and is back in training.

Dave welcomes anyone who fancies a crack at some fell running, and the training sessions tend to be over one of the legs at a time. Keep an eye on the forum if you fancy some winter hill work, or ask at the club and someone will point you in Dave's direction.

A break for porridge at Threlkeld



## THE BOB GRAHAM ROUND

<http://www.bobgrahamclub.co.uk/bobgrahamround.co.uk/>

*The Bob Graham round of 42 Lake District fells traversed within 24 hours is probably the most demanding test of physical fitness available to British Athletes or mountaineers. The rules for the Bob Graham 24 hour club state that the round can be attempted either clockwise or anti-clockwise, provided that the start and finish is at Moot Hall, Keswick.*



Bob Graham worked as a gardener, first in Carlisle and then in Keswick. At the time of the record attempt he was running a guest house in Keswick. Bob loved nothing more than long walks on the fells, the only training he and his friends undertook before their record round was to take regular extended fell walks, sometimes lasting right through the night.

There is some doubt as to Graham's age when he made the round in June 1932 but it is said that the 42 peaks represented one of each year of Bob's life. Bob did his round in tennis shoes, long shorts, and pyjama jacket. His food was bread and butter, a lightly boiled egg and plenty of fruit and sweets for energy.

## Are You Ready for 2010?

**L**ike the football season, the road racing season never really ends. Those of you who have taken part in the North Staffs Road Running Association calendar this year will know that you need to renew between now and the end of January.

If you've never taken part before, check out details at their website

<http://www.nsrta.co.uk>

where you can also find an entry/renewal form, or as part of our own guide to racing published in the August newsletter:

<http://www.southcheshireharriers.org.uk/news/newsletters/2009/newsletter0809.pdf>

In short, what you're signing up for is the chance to compete over the course of 20 races (you don't have to do all of them, and your best 12 results count) against people of a similar ability to your own.

Entry costs just £5, and however modest you think your abilities are, you really might win a prize!

### CHAMPS AGAIN

**STOP PRESS**

**T**he men's team has won the NSRRA team prize for the second successive season.

Congratulations to our top eight points scorers: Ivor Twiss, Pete Marquis-Jones, Rob Cummings, Mike Hatton, Martin Stirna, Nick Dunning, James Simpson and Pat Hudson.



## South Cheshire Harriers a Club for All Runners

**Running at 7pm every Tuesday and Thursday,  
from The Vagrants, Willaston.**

Most of our running is 'social' rather than track running. Our Club Night running is informal. On Winter nights we are restricted to the pavements around Willaston, Shavington and Nantwich, but when the evenings are light we also enjoy the freedom of running on local field footpaths, ranging further afield into the countryside around Wybunbury, Stapeley and Hough.

We have members who are keen road racers; members who are dedicated fell-runners; members who are fleet of foot and members who are joggers. What we all have in common is our satisfaction in running as members of a group, and we can usually ensure that everyone has company for the run. Running should be fun and for enjoyment.

If you are new to running we would like to help you. We have members who have taken coaching courses, so we are qualified to advise if needed.

**Come along and try running with us - we welcome runners of all abilities and there's no obligation to join.**