



# SOUTH CHESHIRE

## Harriers

### Newsletter

Christmas 2009

## Achieving those goals.

**As the New Year approaches, it's relevant to think about what New Year Resolutions one might make. Here are Neil Jones' recollections of his aims for 2009:**

**Like many runners at this stage of the year I start to reflect on the goals I set myself throughout the last twelve months, what I've achieved and what I'm hoping to achieve over the next twelve months.**

**At the start of the year I set myself a few targets I wanted to achieve: gaining new PB's in races; doing well in our Road Club Championship and in the North Staffs Road Runners Association. Having goals and targets helps you stay focused and mentally strong through the tough times over the coming months.**

The year's training started well as I steadily increased my distance to around fifty miles per week, giving me a good platform for the coming season. The PB's I had set were: 5 mile sub 29:00 (29:17); 10K sub 36:00 (36:17); 10 miles sub 60:00 (61:50) and half marathon sub 80:00 (1:21:28).

So, to the Alsager 5 in early February. A fast flat five with a big field to pull you along. Well, it wasn't to be. Starting off much too fast (as usual) chasing the impressive Rich Baker, I struggled at three miles and finished with a time of 29:25. Not to worry; only February and plenty more races to have a go at.

The next opportunity of achieving a new goal was the Village Bakery Half Marathon. My half marathon time was the one I wanted to reduce the most and the distance the one I



seemed to struggle at! This was my first half of the year and I knew I had a great chance of a PB on this fast, flat course. The weather was kind and I settled into the race tucked into a good sized group, which always helps. Even though the first seven miles were quick (41:34) I felt good and at ten miles (60:17) achieved a PB!

A quick mental calculation; I knew I was in with a chance. The next mile was tough as I slowed to

around 6:30 pace, then I got my second wind and upped the pace to smash my PB by nearly three minutes finishing in 1:18:50; happy days!

Into March, and where others were chasing goals in the Off-Road Champs at the Cloud 9 race, I opted for the much more sensible option of the low-key Farndon 10K. Not the flattest of courses but still a quick one. I had a good all round race here, finishing with a new PB of 36:06, 9th overall and winning my age group. So far this still stands as my best time but by the time that you read this I'll have raced at the Helena Tipping and Telford 10K's, so fingers crossed.

*Ed's Note: Neil's time in Helena Tipping: 36:58 - the first Harrier home, but slower than Farndon.*

By April I had put in three good months of training with some good race times as well, so I was feeling strong and fit.

Chester Spring 5 gave another chance of a new goal. Held on a Wednesday evening this race gets full, it being a Cheshire GP event and also the Cheshire Five Mile Champs.

It's a fast race with the first two miles down-hill; the next two are undulating with a flat last mile to finish. I went off yet again like a madman: 5:15 (ouch) for the first mile. But I managed to hang in and crossed the line in 28:40 (28:37 on my watch!)

YES! I'd smashed another target by nearly thirty seconds and in doing so also achieved a long term ambition by winning a Cheshire Championship Gold Medal for the first M40.

A few weeks later I had entered the Wrexham 10, a low-key race over the same routes as the Helena Tipping 10K and the Village Bakery Half, so I knew I had a good chance of getting under 60 minutes. But, on the morning of the race I woke up feeling weak and ached all over!

'I'll be OK' I told myself, but I wasn't. After the first mile I knew I was suffering and at five miles I dropped out. The next week I spent mostly in bed with what Janette diagnosed as man flu. I'm convinced it was one of the first unconfirmed bouts of swine flu! Being ill really set me back and after a week I tried to come

## Achieving those Goals *cont*

back, but it was too soon; I paid the price for not listening to my body as I struggled to regain the level of fitness I'd had at the start of the year.

One good thing was that I was doing well in the Club Champs and achieving good percentages; finishing in third place, mainly due to Mel having a year out. Thanks mate.

The North Staffs Road Runners Association is a great league to be involved in and one where you can set yourself a few personal goals throughout the year. Last year I exceeded all expectations by winning my group (B) and finishing third in my age group. This year I set myself the realistic target of winning Group A, (only joking). No, I just wanted to be competitive and hopefully finish as high in my age group as possible. I managed to finish third again but without the illness I might have managed second place.

By the middle of August I'd reduced my mileage to thirty miles a week. So when I raced at the Great Warford 10, I didn't really put any pressure on myself for a PB; I set off at steady pace for a change, just behind Pete Marquis-Jones and felt quite good. By the half way point I had gone past Pete, which gave me a boost as he was running really well. I'd also caught up with Tom McGaff from Wilmslow who usually runs a sub 60. A quick look at the Garmin at 8 miles: 47:38 - I shouldn't have done that. I dropped to 6:29 pace for the next mile. Now a few stern words with myself: 'Dig deep you're too close to let this slip'!!

It worked, I crossed the line in 59:54. After a couple of minutes on the floor, I got up with the biggest smile ever. Where did that come from??

So, as the year comes to an end with goals and targets achieved, it's time to sit down and think about 2010.

**I've set mine, have you set yours?**

*Neil Jones.*

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# Club Member of the Year Most Improved Runner of the Year

**Each year members of the club can vote for their Club Member of the Year.**

There are no rules or guidelines; you can vote for who ever you like for what ever reason you like, such as race performance, team spirit, contributing to the club etc.

This year we're also asking you to vote for the **Most Improved Runner of the Year.**

Whose running has gone from strength to strength and who has really upped their game? Whether it's someone who has joined the club having never run before or someone who is improving their race times consistently.

## Voting:

**Please note only one vote per club member, closing entry is 15 January 2010.**

- 1 You can vote on-line at: <http://surveys.poll daddy.com/s/D0FCC07E115C0779/>
- 2 You can pick up and leave a paper version of the voting form from the SCH sandwich board on a training night.

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My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My nomination for **Club Member of the Year 2009** is: \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Comments in support of my nomination

And/Or

My nomination for **Most Improved Runner of the Year 2009** is: \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Comments in support of my nomination

## Alsager 5

The Alsager 5, on Sunday 7 February, is a very popular race and always gets a good turn-out from the Harriers.



It's flat, local and nice and short - so if you're contemplating your first race with the club, this is a great place to start. It's also the first race in the NSRRA calendar, for those of you looking to pick up some early points.

In addition, Winky and Judith will be hosting their usual post-race refreshments, to which all are welcome. Bring your race number with you and there will be a prize draw for anyone who ran (probably a bottle of fizz and some chocs, unless I feel very imaginative!)

## AGM

The club's annual general meeting was held on Monday, 23 November. The minutes will be posted on the club website should anyone wish to read a blow-by-blow account.

Belated congratulations to Anthony Hadfield, Jeanette Hatton and Steve Whincup who have been awarded the club's places in the 2010 Virgin London Marathon, as the only members to submit their London rejection letters for the draw. We wish them every success.

It is also worth noting that membership prices have been frozen for the next year: existing members can now pay a £12 'early bird' fee (available till the end of January) to cover the whole of 2010. For new members, and existing members renewing after January, annual membership remains at £16.

## Club Championships

There was a mixture of familiar faces and new blood at the top of the club's road championships when the final race of the series was completed at the Helena Tipping 10K on 6 December.

Mike Hatton once again led from gun to tape in the men's, but Ivor Twiss took a handsome second place, with Neil Jones grabbing the bronze.

In the ladies' event, Nicky Lowe reined supreme, with Gill Gibbons second and a determined Sue Allcock completing the last two races of the series to pip Sarah Dyde to third spot. Nineteen men completed the 8 or more races necessary to comply:

1	Mike Hatton	83.58%
2	Ivor Twiss	79.27%
3	Neil Jones	77.11%
4	Melvyn Cole	75.02%
5	Pete Marquis-Jones	73.85%
6	Pat Hudson	72.83%
7	Nick Dunning	71.55%
8	Andy Mayers	70.56%
9	James Simpson	70.42%
10	Stephen Dawson	68.71%
11	Philip Cooper	67.52%
12	Charles Rowlands	67.07%
13	Martin Stirna	66.44%
14	Michael Cutler	66.19%
15	Alasdair Dyde	65.61%
16	Robert Cummings	65.47%
17	Robert Mayers	64.37%
18	Philip Cliff	62.57%
19	Mick Tobin	62.02%



and four ladies completed 8 events:

1	Nicola Lowe	74.71%
2	Gill Gibbons	69.30%
3	Susan Allcock	61.91%
4	Sarah Dyde	57.57%

This is not the whole story; 30 ladies entered at least one race, as did 48 men.

**Well done all - you've earned your moment in the spotlight at the Awards Dinner, and our unstinting admiration!**

## Awards Dinner

The annual club dinner and awards presentation will take place at Crewe Golf Club in Haslington on Friday, 29 January 2010.

Tickets are £12, and in addition to an array of prizes (for running and non-running matters alike) and guest speaker (tbc), Winky will again be providing a quiz to test the grey matter. Mike Hatton - swot up on your Dickens novels if you don't want a repeat of last year!

This has been a really relaxed and enjoyable evening in the past and a great chance to collectively appreciate each other's efforts over the past 12 months. Don't miss out.

Tickets will be available very soon from Kedren Elliot and Lesley Oldfield (or just ask any committee member for details.)



## Charity Suggestions

The club is looking to nominate a local charity to support in 2010, after we made a £1,000 donation to children's cancer charity CLIC Sargent in 2009. We would like suggestions for small(ish), local charities. One name that has cropped up so far is St Luke's Hospice in Winsford, but please feel free to give additional suggestions, and if we have several we will put it to a vote.

Funds would be raised from our three annual races, plus any individuals who wanted to seek sponsorship to race for our selected charity (but with total freedom to run for any charity of your choosing, of course.)

Post ideas on the forum, or let a committee member know your suggestion.



## New Year Run

The New Year Run will take place on Sunday, 3 January from The Boot Inn, Willington, near Tarporley. There will be a choice of routes suitable for all abilities, largely on the Sandstone Trail.

Runs will start promptly at 10am.

Further details available (offline!) from Mike Cutler.

The pub will be open from 9am for coffee etc and for ordering of food. Please park at the far side of the car park.

Refreshment in the pub for all who wish to stay afterwards.

