



South Cheshire

Harriers

Newsletter - May 2013

This edition covers tales from a range of distances from 5 km to marathon.

We kick off with an epic marathon tale from Steve Carter - the man with a penchant for dodgy races and even dodgier running outfits.

The ups and downs of my running life

About 10 stone ago, I was playing a quite good standard of football but family life and work took over, I found that my priorities changed and fitness was over taken by food (lots of nice food and beer). About 3 years ago we ended up in London, by happenstance, on the day of the marathon. We stood at the 24 mile point and watched the lead women run past, I don't think I could even run 100m at that speed. I was given a flyer from the charity that I was stood next to, they said *"you could be running this next year"*.

"Yeah - whatever", I thought, *"not at that speed"*.

We went off shopping and, as our train was not until later, I said *"let's just go down to the river again and see if anyone is still running"*. It was around 5.00 to 5.30 at night; about 7 and a half hours after the start. It was then that I turned round to Sara (her indoors) and said *"I'm running this next year"*. I can't put in words what I saw and felt, maybe it was the people who thought it would be a good idea to wear a costume and not do the training but they all had a story and this made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck.

So on the Monday I emailed the charity who had given me the flyer and I was in! How hard could it be? 26 miles - Crewe to Chester. I started running that week - 12 months to go - with the idea being to start small and build up.

A close friend suggested that I should join the Harriers – but I didn't think of myself as a runner and figured they would be too fast for me. As the weeks went by I ran to people's houses and got a lift back or Sara dropped me off somewhere and I would run home. Then I found a route which was about a 6 mile round trip which I just added to and, just before Christmas, I got up to 13miles. Halfway there and then reality really hit home: halfway – that meant I needed to do the same again! I tried to run over 13 miles but I thought I had hit my limit.

Then another person mentioned the Harriers, I emailed the club and got the low down on when they ran. I turned up in a set of big bermuda shorts and a big thick jumper and a big hat. I sat in the van watching all these thin looking athletes walk past (with matching everything), thinking - I'm in the wrong place! But as I was starting the van and thinking of making my escape some normal [Ed: *looking*] people turned up. It was now or never - I went for it. I walked in and was guided to Martin, he asked if I was running tonight (this put my mind at rest as I didn't look completely out of place) I said no, but next time [Ed: *so why were you in Bermudas?*].

I turned up on the following Thursday and was put in a group who ran at my pace: I was converted. We passed Martin's group at one point, who were walking up a bank, and we all encouraged each other. Martin texted me that night and asked if I wanted to join his group on Sunday, they were looking to do 15 mile. I texted him back thinking, I don't want to run / walk and asked at what pace, he said I would be able to keep up and there is a lady who is also running the marathon and runs at my pace.

This is where I say everything is not what it seems. Martin ran from Crewe to the Vagrants then ran 15 miles, stopped, and looked as fresh as when we started. That's when I was introduced to Jeanette Hatton, we swapped numbers and she slapped me in to shape-ish. She would say what we were running that week / get a water bottle / you need gels / start drinking lucozade orange [Ed: *the voice of experience*].

The day I 'officially' became a runner was one Sunday. The plan was to do 17 miles, so I went and bought some nice new shorts for the run. We were on the way back to Jeanette's, about 15 miles in, when this racing snake runs past as if we are standing still and shouts "Come on" to Jeanette. I ask who that was and she said that's my husband (Mike). We turned the corner and Mike was already disappearing into the distance. We got back to Jeanette's, Mike had got in and was mowing the lawn! This was the longest run I'd done and things didn't feel right in the chest area or, for that matter, in the shorts area! My boobs looked like I've been paint balled and I had blood running down my legs. I said "I've got to go and get cleaned up". I went to a garage and got a fizzy lucozade drink which I thought would be nice and I was going to the gym for a swim and a cool down. As I got to the gym I was to discover that a fizzy drink is not the best thing after a long run and was sick everywhere! I got into the pool and, as I was the only one in the pool, I thought I could have a nice relax. That's when my legs cramped up and I was stuck in the middle of the Crewe Hall swimming pool laughing at my self like a madman. I rang Jeanette and that is when she said "You're a runner!"

The big day arrived and the family and Mr Daly and Nic had travelled down to London. I had said at 24miles there is a pub called the *Walkabout* and it has a balcony which overlooks the race, I also told them the time I should be there. I was on a different start point to Jeanette and she said that as there are 35,000 people not to expect to see each other but, at just over 3 miles, I heard my name being shouted from behind, and we ran the next 10 miles together. Just before Tower Bridge I said that I need to slow down as my leg just felt a bit strange. I had to nearly kick Jeanette to make her carry on. I ran/walked to about mile 14 when I only had walk left in me, but I had all day and it was a nice day. Then someone in a rhino suit ran past me and my head told me that I was here to run it. I called it a day, hopped on the tube and headed to the *Walkabout*. Sara and the kids weren't there as I wasn't due for another hour but, as they sold beer, Simon was already there. I shouted up to him and he said "you're doing great". As looked round to the race I saw runners who were looking at a sub 3 hour time. When Sara got there she said she could see the pain in my eyes.

The train journey home was a long one, everyone had the medal and the t-shirt on, they looked at me with my marathon bag and then at my chest and... no medal. I had torn my calf and was told I could have carried on but I would



In less illustrious company!



walk with a limp for a few days or I could have done permanent damage if I had finished. A joiner who we were working with said the next week at work pain lasts a hour-day-month-year but failure is for ever - thanks Dave.

Jeanette told me to put in for races as it would keep me focused. I entered the marathon and got straight back in. As the miles went up again I started to get pains in my knees, I went to the docs, then the hospital and was under the knife 22nd Dec. I was told to get a bike and give up on running.

I started running slowly with my brother who also was in the marathon and I told him "*I don't care if I walk I'm not getting on the train without that medal.*" Things stepped up as the miles racked up and I signed up for a mud run with Mark Wilson and Dez Johnson. That was the turning point, I have never laughed so much [Ed: *looking at the photos – I can see why!*]

The day of the race, Sara and kids had decided not to come down - as the kids couldn't take there father being a flop two years on the run [Ed: *harsh!*]. I was on the same start as Jeanette and I was topped up with drugs and felt great until around mile 13 - again I felt a tingle in my knee, so I took another pain killer. At 16 mile it was one too many, as Jeanette disappeared out of sight I was sick (nice) and felt better. I ran/walked the rest and eventually crossed the line.

And, you know what, my medal is the same as everyone else's.



Steve Carter

Parkrun (don't forget your barcode)

For those of you that don't know about Parkrun, it's a free, organized, sponsored 5k weekly run at parks around the world. It started in 2004, but has grown over the years, with its profile raised considerably during the Olympic year. Anyone can run, but you are asked to register on-line first [Ed: *that rules out Mike Cutler then!*]. The process is simple. Google 'Parkrun' and follow the links to register. This is in the form of an email address, age, club and so on; you then get a confirmation email and a link to your personal barcodes. Don't forget your barcodes. Download and print these off, as you will need one to run. That's it. Turn up and run.



All Parkruns are run every Saturday and always start at 0900. You can go to any Parkrun you like. Your barcode will be matched to your position tag at the end, which is then matched to your time for the run. An email is usually sent out the same day with the results, and generally followed up on the specific web site and/or Facebook page.

Our local runs are Parkrun Hanley, Parkrun Congleton and Parkrun Delamere.

- Hanley is a testing two and half lap course that can produce good times if you use the downhill stretch to your advantage. It's always a good idea to combine this run with the appearance of Ivor Twiss. His local knowledge of the best bacon butty stops is second to none. A trip to Bourne Sports is always an option too.
- Delamere is new this year. I've marshalled and it was a muddy affair. James Simpson and Ivor have run it and mentioned snow drifts! A great advantage of Parkrun Delamere is its location with many other routes available for extra mileage pre and/or post "race". I have heard tales of marathon training runs to the start, "race", and then a run home. [Ed: *that sounds more ultra than marathon!*]
- Congleton is a favourite due to its flat-ish 3 lap course around the mere. I know that most of us rely on the Garmin technology to breakdown our mile splits and pace, but for those that don't it's very easy to do a breakdown on this course. 5k = 3.1 miles, so each lap is roughly a mile.



It is a diverse group of runners that attend Parkruns, ranging from the very best to the more relaxed, groups to families. You can use the runs for whatever you want. Race it, jog it, pace friends, take your child for a spin, go for a social chin wag and a bacon butty. I've used my runs to keep some kind of "race edge" in between more important (paid for with real money)



races and to give myself benchmark times to work on. David Betteley uses it for both "race edge" (albeit a disadvantage the day before the Blackpool Marathon – he left a couple of seconds hanging around the mere

that day!) and to help others around to better their times. Dave has been key in helping Natalie "Bails" Bailey reduce her time of 33.31 to 26.11. At the other end of the scale Matt Smith turns up to "just go running with the girls". Mmmmm. 16.5 minutes later he is doing an extra lap or so to catch them up!

Jan Evans, Sue Davies, Ian and Olly Williams, Rob Valentine are all regulars to name a few. Rob Val-



entine is planning an SCH assault on the Parkrun Nottingham one day.

Terry Barker along with his daughter are regulars at Congleton and Sheffield. They both say that Parkrun Sheffield regularly gets 450 runners each week. On the subject of the Barkers, Parkrun has been instrumental in their progression and rehabilitation. Lauren started running last year from scratch, and has used the structure of Parkrun to make her get up each Saturday and go and run. Now 6-7 months on, her times are (dare I say it?) dropping like anvils, she has joined the North Staffs Road Running Association and is entering half marathons. Her Parkrun times have gone from 30 odd minutes to sub 25. Terry has used the "free races" to help him to work with his recovering broken leg. Over shorter, measured distances he has been able to keep his fitness at a reasonable level, sustaining a decent 7.30-8.00 minute mile-ing (for now).

So that's Parkrun in a nutshell.



Volunteers are always welcome, sometimes essential. Some of the above mentioned (and more not mentioned, sorry), myself with Harry and his snow balls (sorry Dan Williams) have all braved the boredom of not running to help the event run smoothly. There are generally posts in the week and lift shares followed by coffees and non Facebook social behaviour (real talking) which is, in turn, followed by usual Facebook social behaviour (banter). Just don't forget your barcode!

Tony Wardle

Mile 23 - Sue Poole

My Virgin London marathon journey started on the 27 September 2012 when I received my entry notice. In 10 days' time I was due to run the Jersey marathon and the plan was to try and get sub 3:50 to get a good for age place in London 2014, the pressure was now off, I had a place. I completed Jersey in 3:52:21, so not too far off my original target.

I asked Alasdair if he would do me a training plan and I started this on the 1st January with a 6 mile run. Little did I know that we were going to have one of the coldest, snowy winters in a long time. I ran in sub-zero temperatures for most of my training. Hat, gloves, snood and thermal leggings were always on; would this weather ever improve? I entered a few races to ensure I was on target for a sub 3:50 time, Four Villages (cancelled!), 10 mile run at Bickerton in snow drifts was done instead, Alsager 5 with another 7 miles added on after, Village Bakery and then Stafford half with another 5 miles added on later in the day. My longest run was 20 miles and I was joined by Phil Cliff for the first 10 miles and then Alasdair for the second 10 miles. Thank you both for running with me as I know this was a very busy weekend for you with the Air Products 10k the next day. I completed the run in the predicted time from my plan.

As the day of the marathon drew nearer the nerves and self-doubt began to creep in, had I done enough, was I getting a cold, did my foot really hurt or was I just looking for problems? As I waited to start my last running session I chatted to Simon Daly about my trainers and he put doubt in my mind about which trainers I should run in; new (worn four times) or old? Contrary to what has been said I didn't forget to take my trainers to London, I decided to take my old ones but, after getting there, sent a text my son to ask him to bring my new ones too - my foot was hurting. I ran in my new ones.

The trip to the Expo to collect my number was great; having my photo taken for the wall of fame, and looking at the newest running gadgets and trainers. This all added to the London marathon experience. Pasta for tea and plenty of fluids to make sure I was fuelled up and



well hydrated. The weather in London was sunny and warm, after all those weeks of cold weather.

Race day: I was so nervous, I hadn't

slept well but this is normal. I left my hotel at 7:15 to make my way to the start at Blackheath. It was a lovely sunny, but cold, morning. I met up with a few of the other Harriers on the Common,; thanks to Mike Hatton for being our leader for the morning.

They say "don't try anything new on race day". Well Cheryl Rees and I did - ladies urinals! I wouldn't recommend them, although the queue did move very quickly, Neil Ridgway commented that he would like to see what it looked like, out of curiosity of course, not because he was a pervert!

As I stood at the start with Andy Durrant I thought about the weeks of training that I had done to get me here. There was a 30 second silence to remember those killed and injured at the Boston marathon six days before. There was an eerie silence across Blackheath, you could have heard a pin drop, and then a whistle was blown and we started to move forward: the race had started.

The sun was out (thank goodness I had put sun lotion on) and spirits were high. It was very congested and I had been told not to run round people and to just settle into the race. My legs felt a little heavy, but again I was told this is normal. I passed Lesley Cole and wished her luck. The first few miles passed easily, I could now see the three blue lines on the floor and I was trying to follow them as much as I could. As the red start runners filtered in boos and banter were heard, all helping to make this the special event it is. At 4 miles I passed the 3:45 pacer and I thought if I could keep him in my sights if he passed me I would get sub 3:50. I passed Ewan Thomas at 7 miles and I was ahead of my predicted time by a few minutes. The crowds were amazing and the noise at some points deafening. All these people shouting my name and encouraging me, I felt like a celebrity!

As I approached Tower Bridge I knew I would go over the 20k timing mat and just around the corner would be half way. I felt great and it was a fantastic feeling running over the bridge. Each time I crossed a 5k timing mat I felt that I had people back home with me keeping me going and encouraging me.

As I came to 15 miles I saw Michelle Ollier, I said hello and she said how hot she thought it was, not quite in those words though! If you know Michelle you will get my drift!! As I ran around Canary Wharf I was looking for my sons, but I didn't see or hear them. It was here I made a mistake by taking a large gulp of water which I then couldn't swallow. I couldn't spit it out either, somehow I managed to slowly swallow it, I didn't do that again, small sips after that. As mile 20 approached I was starting to feel the strain but as I had been told the first 20 miles are a training run the last 6 are the race. I kept this in my mind. By mile 22 the negative thoughts had crept in, my legs were tired and this was

hard, so hard. (Be under no illusion running a marathon is hard. How I had run my first marathon in Liverpool in 2011 without training I have no idea - it must have been ignorance and determination that got me round.) I now just had to focus on the last 4 miles and finishing, the crowds were great but unfortunately I missed my sons and friend at this point as I was just trying to focus and digging deep – sorry.



By mile 23 I was feeling sick, very sick; I was looking for places to stop and be ill. Luckily a water station was up ahead and I

took a small sip of water and this seemed to do the trick my nausea subsided. I then saw a pub called the *Hung, Drawn and Quartered* and thought what a strange name but this was just how I was feeling! As I entered a tunnel we were told to keep to the left. I thought about Claire Squires who died at 25 miles last year and I was worried there was someone dying, it was OK though. I was really digging deep now, everything hurt, I was trying to think all sorts of positive thoughts and working out how much longer in minutes I had to run and where in distance I would be from my house if I was running back home. As I ran past the Lucozade music stand I thought about the choice of song I had asked them to play and this spurred me on a bit.

The mile 24 marker appeared and by now I was just checking how fast per mile I was doing and not taking note of my overall time or where I should be according to my timing race band. (I had a race band for 3:48.) As I passed mile 25 and turned into Parliament Square there was music which picked me up again. I was now looking for St James's Park and then I knew I was nearly done. As I saw 800 metres to go I broke this down in my head into twice around the track, 600 metres to go and then I saw the 385 yards to go sign. As I turned onto the Mall and saw the finish line the 3:45 pacer passed me, I knew I was going to be sub 3:50. As the finish line got closer I saw 3:46 on the clock and knew I had done it. My finishing time was 3:44:01, (this was confirmed by text from friends who were tracking me back home; technology is amazing) - I was delighted.

The London Marathon medal was put around my neck and I began



to cry. I had done it in a time I never thought I could achieve and I had raised a substantial amount of money for Christie's. It was an amazing feeling and I was now smiling from ear to ear. After locating my bag and phone I rang my sons to let them know I had finished and my time, they were amazed and proud of me.

You may wonder why I have called this article Mile 23, well in the evening as I was relaying my London marathon experience to Jeanette Hatton, over a glass of champagne, it seemed that everything about my race happened at mile 23 and so we decided that would make a good name.

Another reason to train

I arrived at the Cumberland in plenty of time on a Sunday morning in Feb and early enough to survey the course and look for anything that might cause me a problem when we get underway. I have chosen to do this in place of a long steady run with Cheryl and Katie - will I regret it? I measure the course, its very flat and in good condition considering the recent weather. I introduce myself to as many of the competitors as I can, although this turns out to be only to those that are willing to socialise with me prior to the start. Well, each to their own I suppose.

Changed and ready, watch checked, everything in place and away we go with me needing to be well up with the pace, especially in the early stages. My training at the club proves to be of great benefit as I get through to half way with plenty left in the tank. As the second half gets harder my stamina kicks in, allowing me to be right at the sharp end of every challenge that comes along.

At the end I reflect on the morning's event. I met 22 guys some of whom I knew before, but 3 of whom I now know better - having their names written down in the notes that I took. Shaken hands with most at the end and also received some unfriendly advice from a lady watching - on how to perform better next time.

For those who are still unsure, I was actually refereeing a football match in the middle of the Cumberland athletics track. 5.4 miles covered, in varying speeds, in a space that is 45m x 90m and I am sure that no player has covered more distance in the ninety minutes we have played, despite them being a lot younger. The only reason I can do this is because of the training I do at the club each week, so whatever your reason for coming along every week, keep smiling, keep going and enjoy all the benefits we get out of it.

Neil Ridgway

Simon's page

SOUTH CHESHIRE 5KM SERIES (FORMERLY QUEEN'S PARK QUACKER 5KM)

June approaches and so too does the second running of the 5km series from Queen's Park. Nearly a year has passed and after the successful inauguration of last year's races, the decision was made to continue with the race series. The format is the same, with 3 races on the last Friday of the month in June, July and August.



This year, I am pleased to announce that the series is sponsored by DNP BUILDINGS AND PLASTICS and BREN GRANT (Sports Masseur), which makes the series a lot more viable especially in terms of prize giving.

Last year's series started slowly, with around 50 competitors in the first race but this climbed to a sustainable 72 by the final race. The limit for each race is 150 and I hope that this will be achieved - if not for the first race - then certainly for the last one.

I originally saw the race series as a cheap way of gaining an accurate 5km time for athletes in a competitive series, with minimal marshalling and organisation. I believe that the series can and should run for quite a few years—especially with the penchant for 5km races at the present.

We will need marshals, as usual, but for Harriers who fancy entering the series, you can do so either online (at ukforms.net) or by filling out the paper entry and giving it to me at the club over the next few weeks.



TIMELESS TEN CLUB RUN

Thurs 20th June 2013 @ 1900

Having run the Limp Wrist 5 on New Year's Day with Mike Cutler and Sue Davies, I made the suggestion to Phil Cliff and Mike Cutler about maybe having the same thing at the club. So, as was the case with the Queen's Park Quacker series last year, an ad hoc meeting was held (over the traditional pint at the Vagrants) and Phil agreed to make the race reality.

The course was discussed and the "informal", but quite well known "approximate 10k" was decided on, leaving from the Vagrants via Haymoor Green lane, Wybunbury Lane, Wrinehill Road, Cobs Lane, Pit Lane and Newcastle Road before finishing outside the Horseshoe Pub.

It has been decided to turn left down Pit Lane after Hough Common so that there won't be any short cuts available to runners, thus reducing the number of marshals required.

So what are the rules, how is it run and WHY is it called the Timeless 10?

SIMPLES: Timeless 10 (km) is based on your own personal time for a 10k, ALTHOUGH the course isn't a 10k but is closer to 6 miles in order to make the estimation more interesting and avoid a potential safety issue. The format is based on the fact that all runners "predict" the time that they will take to complete the course.

So what's to stop competitors predicting a slow time and then waiting behind a hedge until the elapsed time?

AGAIN SIMPLES: Everyone runs WITHOUT a watch or mechanical device (hence timeless)!!

Think it's easy to predict your running pace without a watch?

Well in the Limp Wrist Race on New Year's day, well known and popular runner Ben Gamble (used to winning races in the area) was a full 45 seconds outside his predicted time, so maybe it's not quite as easy as you might think.

The beauty of the format is that you can be first home and still be way off the prizes. Again in the above mentioned race, a runner near the back of the field got their predicted time spot on – quite a feat in its own right.

So just turn up at 18.30 on Thursday June 20th and fill in a slip to give to the desk OR see Phil Cliff or Simon Walker on club nights. The entry fee will be £2 which will be split 50/50 between the prize fund and the club's charity for this year - SADS. Plus there is the added bonus of chips after the run for all runners and support staff.

Simon Walker