



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS (43) JANUARY 1997

PRIZES GALORE AT ANNUAL "DO"

Southwick Village Hall was again the venue on 11 January of the Avon Valley Runners annual party and prizegiving. As well as the usual disco and light supper (at a reduced admission charge), a tableful of draw prizes were there to be won, and no fewer than twenty-eight annual awards were made.

The club championships, decided at the Trowbridge Lions' 5.9-mile race, saw a repetition of the 1995 result in that Andy and Jackie Robertson again emerged champions in 32:16 and 37:36 respectively - his fourth and her third success. Other results: men - 2 P Squire, 3 C Williamson, o-40 G Fice, o-45 N Rosier, o-50 T Rockliffe, o-60 T Bartlett; women - 2 R Barber, 3 C Crichton, o-40 C Crichton, o-45 R Barber, o-50 J Farr.

The awards for best times achieved over the standard distances were distributed as follows: 10 kilometres - men, A Robertson 35:32 (Poole, 1/6); women, M Laney 38:23 (Bitton, 30/6). 10 miles - men, P Squire 57:37 (Cirencester, 31/3); women, J Robertson 1:05:37 (Pucklechurch, 25/2). Half-marathon - men, A Robertson 1:15:51 (Bath, 17/3); women, J Robertson 1:25:50 (Bath, 17/3). Marathon - men, R Withey 3:24:55 (Polytechnic, 22/9); women, J Field 3:54:43 (Hereford, 19/5).

The Vic Bull Trophy for the best over-50 marathon went to Ray Withey (a.k.a. Ted's coach); a husband and wife, Les and Linda Unsworth, were adjudged the most improved male and female runners of 1996; and Anthony Hickson received the Frank Allen Trophy for the outstanding over-50 athlete, for which he qualifies by more than a decade.

The special trophy known as "The Bomb" (a shell-case donated by Neil Fyfe) was earned by supervet Tony Bartlett for his consistent performance during the year; the Ken Barber performance trophy went to Maureen Laney, who achieved an excellent 85 per cent; and the Grape Blister Award for the most unusual injury was some compensation to John Bowley for turning his ankle at the barn dance in November.

New format likely for championships

The club championships have up till now been decided in conjunction with a single race, but if recent proposals receive committee approval the champions for 1997 will be calculated over performances in several races at various distances. Members will be notified of the details as soon as possible.

Dublin: a race beyond the pale?

by Bob Ellis

Sitting astride the River Liffey with its rich cultural links to history and literature (Wilde, Swift, Shaw), Dublin seemed an attractive addition to our overseas running adventures.

For Denise, this was her second marathon of 1996, following her 4:15 debut at London in April and she harboured aspirations to break four hours. I had intended to spend the weekend taking in the culture (and the Guinness!) solely as a spectator. However, in spite of my relative inactivity during the past couple of years, the seduction of another big-city marathon was irresistible. Time is a great deceiver, and painful memories of Berlin 1989 (my last marathon) had diminished.

After a summer of solid if unspectacular training, we set off for the weekend organized by Mike Gratton Sportstours. With the race on the Monday (28 October) public holiday, we flew from Bristol on Saturday morning and returned on Tuesday evening.

Organization was excellent throughout, as was our hotel, the four-star Burlington, only 20 minutes' walk from the city centre. It was also the base for many leading athletes, including the ubiquitous, undernourished but infinitely talented Africans and a large party of Americans.

Our weekend itinerary included: Saturday - registration and marathon exhibition. Sunday - a short, relaxed and good-humoured breakfast run (excellent food and t-shirts); pasta party (disappointing - long queues and not enough food!). Monday - the marathon; post-race party. These organized events were interspersed with shopping in Grafton Street, sightseeing or just watching the world go by in pubs like O'Donoghue's.

Apart from the pasta party, the only other disappointment was the appalling weather, as the tailend of hurricane Rita sent gale-force winds and rain across Eire and the U.K., worsening as the weekend progressed. On race morning the hotel and the coach to the start buzzed with nervous energy, with athletes torn between excitement, expectation and fear - punctuated by the Irish courier, who quipped: "Good luck, Oi t'ink it might be a tadge windy today!"

The race started and finished in the famous O'Connell Street. The course, mostly on the south side of the city, was undulating, with many twists and turns. Crowd support was enthusiastic and there was good camaraderie among the runners. From the westernmost point there was a long stretch by Phoenix Park, north of the Liffey; and the last mile included Ellis Quay!

The marathon is never a good place to throw caution to the winds, but in Dublin '96 the wind threw everything at us, resulting in depressingly slow times. [See Results, Page 5.] Overall, for those contemplating an autumn marathon/weekend break, consider Dublin - no blarney!

Welcome to the Valley

We are glad to announce the following new additions to the membership list during the past three months: Julie West joined in October; and Beatriz and John Makin signed on in November. Happy times in Avon Valley!

Milestones

The following members will move up into the next age-groups during the quarter ahead: Ann Bull, 50 on 16 February; Judy Farr, 55 on 24 January; and Adrian Jones, 40 on 15 February. Happy birthday and good luck!

Karrimor Mountain Marathon*by Colin Williamson*

In May I talked N--- F---* into being my partner in the KIMM, a two-day orienteering race for teams of two over the weekend of 26/27 October. This gave us four months in which to train with backpacks of about 15lb. containing tent, food, sleeping bag etc. On the eve of the race we drove north to Newton Stewart, south-west Scotland, to register and obtain a map of Galloway Forest Park, in which the event was to take place.

There were six classes - élite, A, B, C, long-score and short-score - and as newcomers to the event we were included in the lastnamed, which meant reaching the checkpoints on the first day in five hours and on the second day in four hours. After collecting all the relevant information we prepared to spend our first night under canvas in Scotland in October. It was very wet, and I didn't know you could get so many tents in a small area. I didn't sleep much during the night, due to snoring from the tent right by my ear.

On the morning of the race we started at two-minute intervals. Everyone else seemed like experts, with small backpacks and very fit-looking. Half-a-mile down the track we received our checkpoint card for day one, and set off.

Conditions underfoot varied from knee-depth boggy ground to tufted grass, virtually impossible to run over without twisting something. Luckily the rain had stopped for the first time since six the previous night, but clouds came down and visibility was reduced to 50 yards so we had to rely on the compass all the time until we were very close to the checkpoint (a small flag with a clipper attached to punch the card as proof we had been there). After a bad start we picked up time and started to do quite well, getting to five checkpoints, and finished day one very tired from running over steep and barren country with not a soul in sight.

We set up our camp quickly and got some hot food down to try to keep warm. (At that moment I don't think N--- was too impressed with me for talking him into the race and I thought he was going to thump me, so I cooked the food to keep him quiet.)

During the night we experienced a bad storm, with high winds and torrential rain; I thought the tent was going to be blown away. The organizers had to rescue thirty or so tents as the river had broken its banks, but we were OK. In the morning after breakfast we had to put on wet gear from the previous day.

On day two our start time was 8.15, and as on day one we collected our checkpoint card and set off on course for the first point, which we reached after an hour and a half and 800 metres climbing. After nearly two and a half hours more of wet and windy weather, we seemed to get lost in a pine forest, so we just set the compass and fought our way ahead. Then with only five minutes left we suddenly came out in front of the final checkpoint and reached the finish with only seconds to spare.

Into the refreshment tent then, for soup, rolls and hot tea. At that point I asked N--- if he had enjoyed the race, but I couldn't possibly repeat his answer - I think it may be Scottish for "No!". If anyone wants to run something different in the mountains, you should try this event - it is fantastic.

Out of 302 pairs who started in our class, we finished 84th. [Tim Laney of Clayton-le-Moors (second-claim AVR) and his partner placed 10th in the élite class.]

* Neil Fyfe asked to remain anonymous. - Ed.

The Lanzarote Challenge

by John Bowley

We left the lush English countryside around Bristol on a cold but sunny November mid-morning, and arrived in Lanzarote at 4.30 p.m. There was a difference in the temperature: about 20°C, and with a nice breeze. It remained like that for all of our week.

First impressions of Lanzarote as an island of volcanic cinders and rocks were not far out. But the La Santa sports complex made up for it, with running tracks, gyms and pools, all to Olympic standards, very pleasantly put together. Three of us shared an apartment near the supermarket, bars and restaurants.

Our first full day was spent looking around, then some very taxing aerobics, after which Joyce dashed off twenty-six lengths of the 50-metre pool. The men could not follow that - the needle match had to be at crazy golf, by now in the dark.

Stan had entered a duathlon in addition to the four races of the Challenge. He set off at eight the next morning and staggered back in after a couple of hours, saying that it was the hardest race he'd ever done. However, after a leg-massage, his doubts about the other four races were put aside and he entered for them as well. That afternoon we all went cycling, Stan in the lead, over rough terrain with mountain-bikes a necessity.

On Sunday morning Joyce and John got up early to take a coach to Teguisse, an old town. After a freshly cooked omelette in the market, we explored the 18th-century Spanish colonial house of the former governors. A long winding road led to a 15th-century miniature castle on the rim of an extinct volcano overlooking the town, with fine views to the end of the island.

Sunday teatime was less leisurely, with the first of our challenge races (10km) at 5 p.m. Before the start, we were warmed up by aerobics-instructor girls, but the run still seemed hard, especially for an out-of-condition John. [Results: Page 5.]

There was a 10 a.m. start for Monday's 9km hill race. Although over even bumpier tracks, somehow this race was easier. In the afternoon we were taken by Ken Barber to the Timanfaya region of oddly beautiful volcanic devastation, where nothing has grown since the 18th century. That evening: more crazy golf.

We had to get out of bed earlier still on Tuesday morning to be taken to Playa del Carmen for the 5km soft-sand beach race. Tough at the time, at least this was soon over. Those German women got to the best bit of the beach (the finish) first, with Rose and Joyce now a few minutes behind on aggregate. Afterwards we swam in the deep Atlantic waters of the wide sandy bay.

For the 23km transisland race, from the village of Macher, facilities were the most basic: not only no warm-up girls, but the "Senoras" and "Caballeros" were merely different outcrops of sharp rock at the side of the lane. When the gun went off, we struggled up a long hill for the first 3km. Then after some flat, it was mostly downhill all the way. The road wound through lava fields across the middle of the island to Tinajo. Eventually La Santa came into view, with the sports complex in the distance. Finally a tough downhill chase, hard on the toes.

We finished in the usual order - Rosemary well ahead, then John, Joyce and Stan, half an hour up on lots of younger men and getting a cheer as he came in. (Later that day, he clinched the crazy golf challenge.)

We flew home on the Thursday, to meet the rain we'd missed in Lanzarote.

RESULTS: October-December

6 OCTOBER - Gloucester Marathon: J Bowley 3:55:10. Windsor Half-Marathon: T Rockliffe 1:25:10, S Lewis 1:27:02, M Clarke 1:49:00. Portsmouth 10M: L Unsworth 1:04:23, D Earley 1:12:18, Linda Unsworth 1:16:57. Box 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ M: 7 N Whitehead 41:56, 13 Rose Barber (2nd woman) 46:08, 14 B Hobbs 47:46, 19 Judy Farr (3rd woman) 54:10, 28 Karen Newton 57:21, 30 Susie Phillips 1:00:04; 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ M: 15 I S Farr 26:50, 16 Luke Hobbs (3rd u-16) 26:54.

13 OCTOBER - Devon Riviera Marathon: 75 D Kay 3:37:15, 79 B Dunn 3:38:40. Solent Half-Marathon: S Spedding 1:21:57. Ilchester 8M: 44 Rose Barber (4th woman, 2nd vet.) 57:11, 65 J Bowley 1:00:39, 72 Joyce Field 1:01:49, 89 Judy Farr 1:05:25, 103 Karen Newton 1:10:09, 105 Susie Phillips 1:11:53; 4M: 17 I S Farr 33:43.

20 OCTOBER - Abingdon Marathon: 11 T Rockliffe 3:25:52, 125 D Kay 3:30:02, 149 T Bartlett 3:37:29. Warminster 10K: 12 S Lewis* 39:52, 14 G Johnson* 40:39, 15 N Whitehead* 41:05, 29 A Hickson 43:18, 31 Rose Barber* (1st woman, 1st vet.) 43:45, 45 A Meadow 46:08, 46 J Bowley 46:30, 47 R Sales 46:48, 55 Joyce Field* 48:10, 58 Barbara White* 49:06, 67 Judy Farr 51:55, 68 Beatriz Makin 52:08, 75 Susie Phillips 54:10, 79 Karen Newton 54:48, 82 I S Farr 57:02. *1st men's team; *1st women's team. Avalon CC, Mangotsfield: Men, 80 B Hobbs 33:17; u-15, 8 J Hobbs 17:02; u-13, 12 L Hobbs 15:46.

27 OCTOBER - Stroud Half-Marathon: 146 S Lewis 1:27:12, 448 J Bowley 1:42:32, 472 Joyce Field 1:43:44, 534 R Sales 1:46:20. Cheddar 10M: A Meadow 1:13:22. Corsham Duathlon (5K run, 40K bike, 5K run): 5 S Spedding 19:32 + 1:10:30 + 22:03 = 1:52:05, Mandy Spedding (1st woman) 23:59 + 1:23:34 + 26:00 = 2:13:33, Diane Green 2:30.

28 OCTOBER - Dublin Marathon: R Ellis 3:41:16, Denise Ellis 4:15:36.

3 NOVEMBER - New York Marathon: M Brain 4:14:57, Viv Toms 4:25:09. Salisbury Plain 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ M: 68 S Lewis 1:48:49, 89 R Withey 1:53:20, 142 T Bartlett 2:01:00, 222 M Gerrish 2:20:00. Ilminster 10K: 38 Rose Barber (3rd woman, 1st o-45) 43:29, 50 B Hobbs 45:36, 64 Joyce Field (3rd o-45) 48:20, 77 Judy Farr 50:58, 91 Susie Phillips 54:56, 92 I S Farr 55:08; 5K: 5 J Hobbs (1st u-16) 21:34.

9 NOVEMBER - Victoria Park 4M (5 laps), Bath: 19 G Fice 22:33, 32 J Kent 24:26, 45 Linda Brown 26:34, 50 T Bartlett 28:29, 56 Judy Farr 31:08; 0.8M (1 lap): 7 N Kent 5:50.

10 NOVEMBER - Beagle Bash 10K MT, Chipping Sodbury: Men - 30 S Spedding 46:23, 107 N Rosier 50:49, 114 N Stevens 51:19, 146 N Fyfe 52:37, 203 A Meadow 55:07, A Hickson, I S Farr 1:12:02; Women - Linda Brown*, Jane Gilmore*, Barbara White*, Diane Green*, Joyce Field 1:03:49, Linda Unsworth 1:03:59, Denise Ellis 1:07:09, Susie Phillips, Karen Newton. *1st women's team. Eyston 9K: N Whitehead 33:58.

17 NOVEMBER - Jersey Half-Marathon: B Dunn 1:37:02. Gillingham 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ M: 55 L Unsworth 49:05, 131 Linda Unsworth 58:26, 152 Susie Phillips 1:08:07. Avalon CC, Street: Men, 68 J Kent 35:28, 126 B Hobbs 39:11; u-15, 8 J Hobbs 15:34; u-13, 20 N Kent 14:42. Cardiff Fireworks 5M: Denise Ellis 39:37.

23-27 NOVEMBER - Saturday, Lanzarote Duathlon (2.5K run, 15K bike, 2.5K run): 30 I S Farr 1:09:08; Sunday, 10K road: Rose Barber (11th woman, 2nd o-45) 42:37, Joyce Field (23rd woman, 2nd o-50) 46:54, 157 J Bowley 46:50, 193 I S Farr 54:31; Monday, 9K hill race: Rose Barber (8th woman, 2nd o-45) 40:13, Joyce Field (19th woman, 2nd o-50) 43:50, 131 J Bowley 43:39, 165 I S Farr 49:45; Tuesday, 5K beach race: Rose Barber (7th woman, 2nd o-45) 25:20, Joyce Field (21st woman, 2nd o-50) 27:53, 129 J Bowley 27:42, 163 I S Farr 31:26; Wednesday, 23K trans-island: Rose Barber (12th woman, 2nd o-45) 1:46:58, Joyce Field (15th woman, 2nd o-50) 1:54:04, 101 J Bowley 1:53:56, 130 I S Farr 2:12:46.

24 NOVEMBER - Westbury 10M MT: 65 N Rosier 1:08:35, 99 A Hickson (2nd o-60) 1:12:13, 137 T Bartlett 1:16:02. Bournemouth 10M: S Spedding 1:02:11, R Ellis 1:06:40, M Brain 1:19:59, Denise Ellis 1:21:22, Viv Toms 1:23:24.

27 NOVEMBER - Benidorm Marathon: D Kay 3:30:43.

1 DECEMBER - Yate 5K: Susie Phillips 25:26.

8 DECEMBER - Bromham 10K: 18 S Spedding 35:46, 22 G Fice 36:09, 39 G Johnson 38:07, 40 T Rockliffe 38:09, 42 S Lewis 38:23, 43 N Rosier 38:28, 44 R Luke 38:33, 53 L Unsworth 39:18, 81 Linda Brown 41:15, 82 S Chandler 41:20, 89 A Hickson 41:52, 92 P Mitchell 42:30, 102 J Makin 42:52, 109 D Earley 43:22, 114 T Bartlett 43:51, 123 J Bowley 44:26, 125 Mandy Spedding 44:39, 126 Joyce Field (1st o-45) 44:43, 134 R Sales 45:29, 136 M Brain 45:47, 137 Linda Unsworth 45:49, 146 Beatriz Makin 47:02, 176 Karen Newton 50:48, 177 Susie Phillips 50:52, 187 Judy Farr 52:10, 188 D Mellor 52:26.

15 DECEMBER - Avalon CC, Swindon: Men, 30 J Kent 26:45, 51 B Hobbs 29:34, 53 P Mitchell 30:07; u-15, 3 J Hobbs 15:51. Christmas Pud Mud Run 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ M MT, Yeovil: 46 Rose Barber (3rd woman, 1st o-45) 59:46, 54 A Hickson 1:01:11, 86 I S Farr 1:12:17.

22 DECEMBER - Wellington Monument 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ M: 51 Rose Barber (2nd woman, 1st vet.) 44:56, 89 Judy Farr (3rd vet.) 55:45, 93 I S Farr 57:11.

26 DECEMBER - Trowbridge Boxing Day 3.4M: 1 M Connor (Bath AC) 19:03, 2 S Spedding 19:13, 3 A Bartlett 19:20, 4 N Stevens 19:47, 5 N Fyfe 20:49, 6 S Reeves 21:10, 7 T Rockliffe 21:41, 8 Rose Barber 22:29, 9 T Bartlett 23:18, 10 G Saxty (Trowbridge AC) 24:21, 11 P Chapple 25:22, 12 Judy Farr 26:47, 13 K Lee 27:13, 14 Karen Newton 27:49, eq 15 Susie Phillips & I S Farr 27:59, 17 J Woodsford (Trowbridge AC) 34:44.

FIXTURES: January-April
JANUARY

Sun 12 Milbourne 10M, 10.30
 Sun 19 Avalon League CC, Weymouth
 Sun 26 Romsey 5M, 11.00

FEBRUARY

Sun 1 Gillingham Relays, 11.00
 Sun 9 Weston Tough 10M MT, 11.00; Blackmore Vale Half-Marathon
 Sun 16 Dursley Dozen, 10.30; Erlestoke 6.8M CC, 12.00;
 Avalon League CC, Midsomer Norton
 Sun 23 Pewsey Hill 10M MT, 10.30

MARCH

Sun 2 Imber Half-Marathon, 10.00;
 Avalon League CC Relays, Salisbury;
 Great Western Runners 10M, Pucklechurch, 10.30
 Sun 9 Cheddar 10M MT, 11.00
 (or 6 April) AVR 10K Multi-Terrain, Bradford-on-Avon
 Sun 16 Bath Half-Marathon, 11.30
 Sun 23 Trowbridge Lions' 5.9M, 11.00; Grizzly 17M, Seaton
 Sun 30 Fivehead 10K, 11.00

APRIL

Sun 6 Totton 10K, 2.30
 (or 9 March) AVR 10K Multi-Terrain, Bradford-on-Avon
 Sun 13 London Marathon

Secretary's report

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who made my 60th birthday such a memorable occasion. It's a pity the lady involved didn't want to join the club after all.

By the end of 1996 we reached the magnificent total of 100 members. Eleven members have gained places in this year's London Marathon, and we wish them well.

I would welcome any help at the Lions' Fun Run on 23 March, if any of you are injured at the time.

The treasurer has asked me to point out that subscriptions (still only £5) are now due. The benefits of membership far exceed the trifling amount involved, but those not paying up by April run the risk of suspension from the club list. You've been warned! - Stan Farr.

An honour richly deserved

Following the conferring on Stan Farr on his 60th birthday of the Freedom of the Valley, at the club a.g.m. on 2 January this was confirmed in material terms by a unanimous decision to make him and Judy honorary life members of Avon Valley Runners, in recognition of all they have done during the eleven years of the club's existence and continue to do, week in, week out, year after year, in hard work and dedication to the interests of AVR.

Officers elected for 1997 are: President Mike Holland, vice-president Clive Crocker, chairman Bob Ellis, vice-chairman George Henderson, secretary Stan Farr, assistant secretary Judy Farr, treasurer Dennis Mellor, men's captain Colin Williamson, women's captain Joyce Field, vice-captain Denise Ellis, coach Bob Ellis, press officer Tim Northwood, additional committee members Gerry Fice, Mike Hehir, Bernie Hobbs, Glenn Johnson, Simon Reeves, Ted Rockliffe, Les Unsworth.

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