



# Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS (55) JANUARY 2000

## Kevin and Jackie are 1999 champions

Last year's club championships, in a further adjustment to the rules while maintaining the principle of best aggregate time to decide the results, allowed members to submit performances in any recognized races at the required distances. Perhaps as a result of this increased freedom of choice, there were increases in the numbers of qualifiers in both the men's (from sixteen the previous year to eighteen last year) and women's (from four to seven) championships.

There were close finishes in both main categories. Kevin Sparey's aggregate for 10 kilometres, 10 miles and half-marathon was only 31 seconds less than second-placed Alistair Bartlett's; while Jackie Rockliffe's total of 2:09:25 for 5 kilometres, 10 kilometres and 10 miles was just 1 minute 44 seconds better than that of veteran Rose Barber.

### FULL RESULTS MEN

	<i>Age-group</i>	<i>10K</i>	<i>10M</i>	<i>Half-Mthn</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1	Kevin Sparey	40-44	35:34	58:52	1:19:34	2:54:00
2	Alistair Bartlett	Non-vet	36:08	1:00:08	1:18:15	2:54:31
3	Sean Greenland	45-49	39:02	1:03:55	1:26:17	3:09:14
4	Ted Rockliffe	50-54	40:43	1:07:25	1:27:02	3:15:10
5	Gerry Fice	45-49	41:01	1:15:20	1:21:40	3:18:01
6	Chris Switzer	40-44	39:52	1:09:10	1:29:10	3:18:12
7	Les Unsworth	40-44	40:58	1:07:12	1:31:07	3:19:17
8	Bob Ellis	40-44	39:59	1:08:30	1:31:44	3:20:13
9	Anthony Hickson	60+	41:48	1:10:37	1:36:33	3:28:58
10	Paul Turner	45-49	41:55	1:21:12	1:40:00	3:43:07
11	Mike Pratt	50-54	47:34	1:17:16	1:40:39	3:45:29
12	Bob Sales	40-44	46:25	1:18:37	1:47:56	3:52:58
13	Tony Griffith	60+	49:14	1:19:17	1:50:48	3:59:19
14	Dennis Mellor	60+	51:06	1:22:51	1:50:43	4:04:40
15	Tony Bartlett	60+	51:05	1:24:16	1:53:35	4:08:56
16	Stan Farr	60+	52:36	1:25:48	1:57:57	4:16:21
17	Glyn Phillips	50-54	52:34	1:24:35	1:59:53	4:17:02
18	Bill Howsego	60+	52:41	1:32:00	1:59:37	4:24:18

### WOMEN

	<i>Age-group</i>	<i>5K</i>	<i>10K</i>	<i>10M</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1	Jackie Rockliffe	Non-vet	19:58	41:16	1:08:11	2:09:25
2	Rose Barber	45-49	19:40	41:43	1:09:46	2:11:09
3	Linda Unsworth	40-44	23:05	46:03	1:15:56	2:25:04
4	Susie Phillips	45-49	23:01	47:01	1:17:09	2:27:11
5	Denise Ellis	Non-vet	25:03	46:27	1:17:51	2:29:21
6	Joyce Field	50+	22:48	49:37	1:20:34	2:32:59
7	Judy Farr	50+	23:41	47:54	1:29:38	2:41:13

Editor: Tim Northwood, 45 Hilberton Road, Trowbridge; Tel. 769929.

# The Day after Christmas

## (IN MEMORIAM\*)

by *Tony Bartlett*

1. Christmas comes but once a year,  
And when it comes it brings good cheer;  
But this old adage, as the wise folks say,  
Has its vengeance on St Stephen's Day.
2. On the 26th next morn in bed  
You wake with a throbbing, thundering head;  
The kids are shouting, "Dad, get up!"  
Black coffee you need – a big strong cup.
3. You tumble downstairs at an awkward gait;  
Breakfast's over, you've risen too late,  
But it matters not, for bacon and eggs  
Wouldn't do much for your stomach and legs.
4. You collapse in the armchair next to the table.  
You really should shave, but you just don't feel able.  
Your bleary eyes take in the mantel clock face.  
Suddenly it hits you – it's the Boxing Day race!
5. There's an hour to go to get ready in time  
For this taxing annual pantomime.  
So it's down to the Castle your way you make,  
Remembering your kit and shoes to take.
6. Your belly is rumbling as you stand at the start:  
Why, oh why, do you always take part?  
The hon. sec. says "Go!", and forward you lurch,  
Past lime trees and oak and slim silver birch.
7. Out by the garage and down the long road:  
How many times these hard miles have you strode?  
It's the same every year, you say "Never again"  
As you battle along in the cold driving rain.
8. At last comes the hill with the crossroads at top;  
You're tempted so much to give in and just stop;  
The underpass now, it must surely come soon,  
And you know you'll end up with the wooden spoon.
9. You splutter and cough at the finishing mark:  
Why couldn't you have strolled a few yards in the park?  
The times are collated and pub drinks are poured;  
You just can't believe it, but you've won an award!
10. Much later that day, homeward you stagger.  
Your trophy aloft, through the front door you swagger  
(You've had a great time with your running-club brothers)  
To see a note on the hallstand: "I've gone home to Mother's!"

\*After 38 continuous years on the Trowbridge–West Ashton–Trowbridge course, the 1999 race was held at Steeple Ashton.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Once more I would like to wish all members a happy and healthy New Year. It doesn't seem nearly fifteen years ago that at Roger Carey's wedding a group of us decided to stay put and not move to Melksham with Trowbridge Athletic Club.

The 1999 club championships were the most exciting yet, with nothing decided until thirty-two members turned out at Bromham in December.

The Boxing Day run from the Longs Arms, Steeple Ashton, a new venue, was a great success, with a friendly landlord and a traffic-free course.

Social tickets are on sale from Judy and are really good value with a good buffet included.

I would like to thank all those members who have helped promote races, those who help with the children and even those who cannot get to club training whose annual subs help to keep our fees low.

We all wish good luck to the fifteen members who have gained places in the London Marathon.

Finally, who was the elderly member recently offered a seat by a lady on an airport bus? — *Stan Farr*.

## Welcome to the Valley!

Four newcomers joined the club during the past three months. **Mark Calway**, who'll be twenty later this year, signed on on 21 October; **Maurice Cockell**, who left a few years ago, returned to the fold on 4 November; **Ashley Leat**, who will soon be a veteran, joined on 12 December; **Deane Smith**, another former member, rejoined on 14 October. We wish you all happy running in the Valley.

## Milestones

Only two Runners graduate to the next age-group this quarter. Birthday greetings and happy hunting to **Pauline Sanger**, 50 on 13 March, and **Kevin Sparey**, 45 on 2 March.

## RESULTS: October-December

**SAT. 2 OCT. - Argentan Half-Marathon, France:** 538 Anthony Hickson (1st *o-60*) 1:38:01, 823 Joyce Field 1:48:41, 1089 John Bowley 2:08:56.

**SUN. 3 OCT. - Gloucester Marathon:** 8 Sean Greenland 3:00:23, 17 Danny Kay 3:16:44, 30 Ted Rockcliffe 3:28:51. **Clarendon Way Marathon:** Viv Toms 4:36:12. **Windsor Half-Marathon:** 170 Chris Switzer 1:29:08. **Longleat Relays: Men's 6 x 5K:** 10th team AVR - Bob Sales 22:23, Kevin Sparey 18:31, Gerry Fice 18:22, Chris Baross 20:05, Alan Meadow 22:27, Bob Ellis 19:17 (total 2:01:05). **Veteran women's 4 x 5K:** 1st team (6th women's team overall) AVR - Linda Brown 21:09, Rose Barber (2nd fastest) 20:49, Susie Phillips 24:54, Linda Unsworth 24:10 (total 1:31:02); **women's 4 x 5K:** 9th team AVR - Jackie Rockcliffe 21:38, Denise Ellis 25:03, Diane Green 25:56, Rose Barber 22:26 (total 1:35:03). **Box 6½M:** 2 Alistair Bartlett 39:35, 6 Nick Ghey 46:52, 11 Tony Bartlett 54:06, 14 Stan Farr 57:51; **Box 3¼M:** 2 Sam Ghey (1st *u-15*) 20:44, Verity Bartlett (1st woman) 24:30.

**SUN. 10 OCT. - Kingston Marathon:** Danny Kay 3:29:59. **Cirencester 10K:** Anthony Hickson 43:00, Tony Griffith 49:55.

**WED. 13 OCT. - Street 5K:** Kevin Sparey 17:10, Gerry Fice 17:28, Rose Barber 20:03.

**SAT. 16 OCT. - Weymouth 10M:** 71 Bob Ellis 1:08:30, 84 Rose Barber (1st *o-50*) 1:09:47, 133 Mike Pratt 1:17:16, 167 Joyce Field (1st *o-55*) 1:21:51, 180 Susie Phillips 1:24:45, 194 Stan Farr 1:28:15, 199 Bill Howsego 1:32:00.

**SUN. 24 OCT. - Abingdon Marathon:** Danny Kay 3:23:48. **Stroud Half-Marathon:** 45 Kevin Sparey 1:19:34, Martin Connor (Bath AC) 1:21:30, 64 Gerry Fice 1:21:40, 81 Alistair Bartlett 1:23:05, 236 Les Unsworth 1:32:29, 326 Ray Withey 1:37:27, 421 Mike Carpenter 1:42:15, 480 Nick Hawkins 1:44:51, 515 Viv Toms 1:47:11, 531 Joyce Field 1:48:18, 582 Susie Phillips 1:50:25, 592 Dennis Mellor 1:50:43, 597 Denise Ellis 1:51:00, 664 Tony Bartlett 1:53:42, 737 Stan Farr 1:57:57, 766 Glynn Phillips 1:59:53, 800 Bill Howsego (2nd *o-70*) 2:03:33. **Salisbury 8K CC:** Tony Griffith 43:27.

**SUN. 31 OCT. - Bracknell Half-Marathon:** 186 Anthony Hickson 1:36:33. **Three Peaks Stickler MT:** 68 Neil Whitehead 1:20:36, Mike Gerrish 1:51:31. **Cheddar 10M:** Kevin Sparey 1:00:02. **Klix 10K, Basingstoke:** Susie Phillips 49:33, Glyn Phillips 52:34.

**WED. 3 NOV. - Freshwater 10M:** Chris Switzer 1:09:10.

**SUN. 7 NOV. - Harrow Marathon:** Danny Kay 3:22:04. **Salisbury Half-Marathon:** 6 Alistair Bartlett 1:22:54, Jackie Rockcliffe (2nd woman) 1:35:06, Tony Bartlett 1:54:07. **Jersey Half-Marathon:** 73 Bob Ellis 1:31:44, 189 Denise Ellis 1:49:24.

**Ilminster 10K:** 4 Kevin Sparey (1st *o-40*) 36:43, 23 Deane Smith 39:37, 79 Susie Phillips (2nd *o-45*) 49:49, 101 Stan Farr 53:22, 117 Judy Farr 56:02; **Ilminster 5K:** 3 Sam Ghey (1st *u-14*), 5 Nick Ghey. **Gillingham 7½M:** Rose Barber (4th woman) 52:15.

**SAT. 13 NOV. - Victoria Park Road Races, Bath: Senior 4M:** 21 Alistair Bartlett 22:45, Jackie Rockcliffe (8th woman) 27:03, 51 Anthony Hickson 27:15, 61 Bob Sales 29:05, Cathie Greenland (10th woman) 29:47, 72 Tony Bartlett 32:32. **U-16 1-6M:** 2 Sam Ghey 9:28, 5 Nick Kent 11:31. **1M Fun Run:** Emmy Ghey (1st girl) 6:58. **Bideford 5K CC (Open + South-West Champs.):** 12 Rose Barber (2nd *o-50*, 1st SW *o-50*) 22:25, 26 Joyce Field (1st SW *o-55*) 26:02.

**SUN. 14 NOV. - Sodbury Slog 9M MT:** 57 Chris Baross 1:15:27, 100 Nigel Stevens 1:20:07, 142 Nick Stevens 1:24:18, 173 Nick Hawkins 1:27:35, 230 Tony Griffith 1:33:02, 251 Mark Calway 1:35:41, 266 Mike Gerrish 1:38:25, 310 Stan Farr 1:51:49, 330 John Bowley 2:05:50. **Avalon League CC, Bath: U-13 boys -** 23 Jake Hobbs 16:51; **U-15 boys -** 12 Luke Hobbs 19:47; **women -** 44 Viv Toms 23:22; **men -** 49 Gerry Fice 30:13, 110 Bernie Hobbs 37:16, 112 Steve Noyes 38:26.

**SUN. 21 NOV. - Cornish Marathon:** Danny Kay (1st *o-55*) 3:32:52. **Bournemouth 10M:** 39 Kevin Sparey 58:52, 51 Alistair Bartlett 1:00:08, 80 Sean Greenland 1:03:55, 127 Ted Rockcliffe 1:07:25, 140 Les Unsworth 1:08:05, 142 Jackie Rockcliffe 1:08:11, 226 Steve Noyes 1:15:20, 227 Gerry Fice 1:15:20, 236 Linda Unsworth 1:15:56, 257 Susie Phillips 1:17:09, 265 Denise Ellis 1:17:51, 286 Tony Griffith 1:19:17, 298 Joyce Field 1:20:34, 317 Dennis Mellor 1:22:51, 333 Tony Bartlett 1:24:16, 337 Glyn Phillips 1:24:35, 348 Stan Farr & Viv Toms 1:25:48.

**SUN. 28 NOV. - Brent Knoll Hill Race:** 102 Anthony Hickson 54:27. **Yate 10K:** Tony Griffith 50:52.

**SUN. 28 NOV.-WED. 1 DEC. - Lanzarote Four-Race Challenge:** SUNDAY, 10K: **Men -** 207 Glyn Phillips 52:39, 208 Stan Farr 52:50, 213 Bill Howsego (2nd *o-70*) 53:21; **women -** 21 Rose Barber (1st *o-50*) 43:31, 48 Susie Phillips 48:33. MONDAY, 13K Ridge Race: **Men -** 196 Stan Farr 1:09:44, 198 Bill Howsego 1:10:00, 211 Glyn Phillips 1:25:02; **women -** 21 Rose Barber (1st *o-50*) 57:39, 52 Susie Phillips 1:05:29. TUESDAY, 5K Beach Race: **Men -** 192 Bill Howsego 34:14, 200 Stan Farr 37:18; **women -** 24 Rose Barber (1st *o-50*) 29:07, 55 Susie Phillips 34:00. WEDNESDAY, 23K Transisland: **Men -** 164 Stan Farr 2:03:35, 165 Bill Howsego 2:04:33; **women -** 24 Rose Barber (1st *o-50*) 1:46:00, 44 Susie Phillips 1:57:09. FINAL POSITIONS: **Men -** 168 Bill Howsego (2nd *o-70*) 4:42:08, 169 Stan Farr 4:43:26; **women -** 20 Rose Barber (1st *o-50*) 3:56:17, 42 Susie Phillips 4:25:12.

**SUN. 5 DEC. - Wyvern Christmas Cracker 10K:** 19 Kevin Sparey 36:02, 349 Susie Phillips 47:36, 580 Judy Farr 53:20, 583 Stan Farr 53:22, 763 Joyce Field & John Bowley 59:20.

**WED. 8 DEC. - Street 5K:** Jackie Rockcliffe (2nd woman) 19:58.

**SUN. 12 DEC. - Bromham 10K:** 9 Kevin Sparey\* 35:34, 10 Alistair Bartlett\* 36:08, 22 Deane Smith\* 38:20, 32 Sean Greenland\* 39:02, 38 Chris Switzer 39:52, 40 Bob Ellis 39:59, 46 Neil Whitehead 40:45, 47 Ted Rockcliffe 40:49, 54 Jackie Rockcliffe† (3rd woman) 41:16, 58 Anthony Hickson 41:48, 64 Rose Barber† (1st *o-50*) 42:24, 70 Neil Fyfe 42:58, 77 Alex Cox 43:35, 85 Paul Turner 44:01, 91 Ray Withey 44:15, 107 Steve Noyes 45:44, 112 Linda Unsworth† 46:03, 119 Bob Sales 46:25, 120 Denise Ellis 46:27, 123 Susie Phillips 47:01, 138 Viv Toms 48:52, 139 Nigel Evans 49:02, 145 Dave Earley 49:36, 146 Joyce Field 49:37, 160 Tony Griffith 50:50, 161 Robin Porter 50:57, 162 Tony Bartlett 51:05, 163 Dennis Mellor 51:06, 169 Mark Calway 52:12, 175 Stan Farr 52:36, 201 Tina Vivian 57:27. \*1st men's team. †1st women's team. **Avalon League CC, Glastonbury: U-14 boys -** 2 Sam Ghey 13:41.

**SUN. 26 DEC. - Boxing Day 3-2M:** 1 Kevin Jennings (Hercules-Wimbledon) 17:48, 2 Alistair Bartlett 18:13, 3 Rose Barber (1st woman, 1st *o-50*) 21:22, 4 Anthony Hickson 21:30, 5 Sam Ghey (1st *u-18*) 21:35, 6 Nick Ghey 21:56, 7 Les Unsworth 23:20, 8 Linda Unsworth (2nd woman) 23:20, 9 Sally Tucker (unat.) (3rd woman) 23:48, 10 Susie Phillips 24:09, 11 J. Snell (unat.) 24:36, 12 Joyce Field 24:59, 13 Dennis Mellor 26:08, 14 Neil Fyfe 26:16, 15 Bill Howsego 26:39, 1 Judy Farr 26:43, 17 Tony Bartlett 26:50, 18 Stan Farr 28:59, 19 Sarah-Jane Phillips (unat.) 30:47, 20 Alistair Rose (unat.) 30:47, 21 John Woodsford (Trowbridge AC) 36:40.

To ensure inclusion in *Valley News*, *Wiltshire Times* and *The Book*, telephone results to Stan Farr, 01225 755605.

## FIXTURES: January-April

### JANUARY

- Sun 16 Bradford-on-Avon Scouts' 5K & 5M, 11.00; Avalon League CC, Rodway Common, Mangotsfield, 1.00.  
 Sat 22 AVR Club Party & Prizegiving, Southwick Village Hall, 7.30.  
 Sun 23 Slaughterford 9M MT, 10.00; Romsey 5M, 11.00; Yate 10K, 11.00.

### FEBRUARY

- Sun 6 Blackmore Vale Half-Marathon & 5¼M, 11.00.  
 Sun 13 Avalon League CC, The Croft, Swindon, 1.00; Castle Combe 10K, 10.30.  
 Sun 20 Weston Tough 10M MT, 11.00.  
 Sun 27 Pewsey Hill 10M MT, 10.30; Yate 10K, 11.00.

### MARCH

- Sun 5 Imber Half-Marathon, Warminster, 10.00.  
 Sun 19 Bath Half-Marathon.  
 Sun 26 Trowbridge Lions' 10K, 11.00; Salisbury 10K; Bath 5K, 12.00.

### APRIL

- Sun 16 London Marathon; Frenchay 10K, 11.00.

## OFFICERS FOR 2000

At the annual general meeting of Avon Valley Runners, held on Thursday 6 January in the Avon Sports Club, the following officers were elected: 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, Ted Rockliffe; vice-captain, Les Unsworth; women's captain, Joyce Field; vice-captain, Denise Ellis; press secretary, Tim Northwood; additional committee members – Alistair Bartlett, Tony Bartlett, John Bowley, Tony Griffith, Bernie Hobbs, Susie Phillips, Simon Reeves.

### Memory Lane . . .

## CROSS-COUNTRY RUNNING IN 3 COUNTRIES

In Natal, South Africa, where in the mid-'60s I first experienced the delights of running off-road in league races, there was not a spike to be seen, nor a postage-stamp's-worth of mud either, because winters in that eastern warm temperate part of the continent were bone-dry, with the ground hard, and what grass survived from the summers was coarse, tussocky and long. In those days, the league was keenly contested by clubs from all over the province, but mainly from the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and the courses provided a variety of terrain and a welcome change from the long road training which most of us were into in preparation for marathons and specifically the 56-mile Comrades Marathon. The standard was still high in those pre-running-boom days, and it was a great honour when after three years of competing with Collegians Harriers of Pietermaritzburg I was selected for the Natal B team in an interprovincial meeting – an opportunity which, incredibly, I didn't take, in favour of a day at the (horse) races with friends.

A few years later, having emigrated in 1971, I was living in Clonmel, county Tipperary, and there I purchased my first pair of spikes to compete first in county championships at different grades and then as a proud member of the Tipperary team in inter-county races for four seasons. In November 1972 I was third in the county novice championship on Clonmel Racecourse, in which the winner aged 16½ was exactly half my age! A month later I was second in the intermediate race at Kilfeakle – but I failed to continue this logical progress by winning the senior event. We were fortunate in Clonmel in having just over the River Suir a limitless expanse of woods and heather-clad mountains – a paradise for lovers of the country and ideal training-grounds.

Cross-country in Ireland, especially the local and county races, was mostly over tough courses with few or no facilities: after we'd churned our way through mud and battled over stony fields in some out-of-the-way venue, with no hot showers or even a shed to change in, it amazed me to see the other runners emerge shining-faced from their cars, dressed in their Sunday best. National and inter-county races were usually held on racecourses (of which Ireland has more than its fair share), to accommodate the large fields and to take advantages of the facilities; but some of the racecourses were far removed from the well-manicured, gently sloping venues usually seen on Saturday afternoon television: I particularly recall the muddy hills of the course at Tuam (pron. "Chew 'em), co. Galway, where the horses must have been either of a specially tough breed or didn't last many seasons.

After five memorable years in Ireland, with mixed feelings I moved once more to England, to settle in Trowbridge, where I lost no time in joining the local athletic club, meeting some of those who are our clubmates to this day. At the first opportunity I took steps to enter the English National, in my opinion the finest cross-country race in the world, in which around 1,500 from the cream of English clubs battle it out over nine miles of mud which has been ploughed up by the youths' and juniors' races earlier in the day. That year, 1978, the event was held in Roundhay Park, Leeds. Fortunately I was allowed to enter as an individual: many better runners never get to run in the National because their large clubs have filled their team allocation of twelve members. And that year (the first of six or seven outings in the event), I was falsely flattered by the first results sheet which came out showing that I'd finished 50th, and for a little while I tried to believe it. The official results told the full story: there had been 930 ahead of me that day, but over 600 behind me too. The next year's race was at Luton, in 1980 it was at Leicester, and 1981's at London's Parliament Hill Fields; and I wondered whether there was a rule that limited the National to places beginning with an "L". Incidentally, the toughest National course I remember was at Milton Keynes, of all places!

Back home with Trowbridge AC, we competed in both Avalon and Wessex leagues, with a variety of testing courses as far afield as Weymouth in the south and Oxford in the north, Overton in the east and Portishead in the west. We took our turn at putting on early-season fixtures, using the country park at Bradford familiar to all AVR members. To ease pressure on the limited facilities at Culver Close, it wasn't unknown for a couple of hardy Trowbridgians to swim in the River Avon after these meetings. It has always puzzled me in recent years why our members seem so little interested in this fine branch of the sport. I wouldn't have missed the experience for anything. – *Tim N.*