



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS (60) APRIL 2001

Musings of a Rheumatic Geriatric

by Tony Bartlett

1. For men and women of more mature years,
Age is not a barrier and holds no gristly fears;
The young may scoff when your brain goes numb,
But oh dear, youth, your time will come!
2. Tho' the alchemy of winter lies buried in your bones,
Time is not important, Time has no limit zones.
Heed not the myriad agonies of ancient creaks and pain,
For in your heart you know you stand proud and young again.
3. With a slackened jaw and fading sight,
Your hands all shaky when you try to write,
Legs are swollen with varicose veins;
So little of your youth remains.
4. Your hair turns grey and disappears —
Sure evidence of advancing years;
Feet arches drop and dark blotches appear,
Dappling the skin once bronzed and clear.
5. Upper-body bits sag and lower bits shrink,
Which proves you're no longer in the pink;
But your teeth are still so pearly white —
In the jar, by the bed, last thing at night.
6. At the back of the startline you happily jostle
With many another archaic old fossil;
At each water station you take a long sip
To quench your thirst and wet your cracked lip.
7. The road is so hard, uphill and so long,
Your brain says "right" but your legs say "wrong";
But with arthritic knees and wheezing chest
You are still determined to do of your best.
8. Those sprints you used to do each day
Now seems so many years away;
Races get longer and times are increased,
And energy levels all but deceased.
9. At the post office counter you take your turn in the queue,
Your pension to get and your bus pass too.
You are free, unencumbered, and don't need to work,
But this doesn't mean that you're allowed to shirk.
10. So don't rest indoors with a book just sitting
Or laze on the sofa with pattern and knitting;
Don't doze on the beach in swimsuit just sunning,
But pull on those shorts and keep right on running!

SECRETARY'S REPORT

On behalf of the club I would like to welcome all the new members who have joined this year [*see below*]. To put you in the picture, we organize a few fun events on Thursday evenings during the summer from the clubhouse in Pound Lane, Bradford-on-Avon. There will be the BernCol Relay (named after Bernie Hobbs and former member Colin Williamson, whose idea it was) over a 1-mile, 666-yard course along the canal towpath, teams of three drawn by chance, on 3rd May and 30th August. On 10th May, we hope to have a Paarlauf [pairs relay] around the Victory (cricket) Field*. On the last Thursdays of May (31st), June (28th) and July (26th) we have the enjoyable Tom Roberts Handicap (founder member Tom, long since left for Reading, being the person who suggested it), over a 5,127-metre circuit with one short hill.

I would like to point out that there are groups of runners going out at other times than the Tuesday and Thursday training nights. On Sunday mornings one group leaves the Tithe Barn carpark at 9.30 and another group leaves Budgens' carpark at 10.30. On Saturdays at 2 p.m. there's usually a group of us again leaving from Budgens for a leisurely four miles; and the same time and place on Mondays and Wednesdays.

I also remind members that we replace lost fluids after training on Thursday evenings at club headquarters, a.k.a. The Beehive, whose landlord Clive Crocker is a vice-president of Avon Valley Runners. — *Stan Farr*.

*The only other example of this novel type of competition known to me has been held by Lauriston Runners Club on a road circuit round part of Wimbledon Common, every Christmas Day for the past forty years or so. The members of each pair (*paar*), drawn from "A" and "B" lists, take turns to run laps or half-laps (whatever suits their different abilities) for a set time of half an hour. At 28 minutes a warning shot of the gun is given, after which no handover may be made. At 30 minutes the finish gun is fired, when runners must stop where they are. The distance run by each pair is then calculated by adding up the number of laps and pacing out the extra distance run. It's an interesting change from normal competition, and can be a tough speedwork session — with a sting in the tail for those unfortunate to be about to hand over when the 28-minute gun goes off. Having almost completed a stint and looking forward to sending their partners on their way, instead they have to keep the effort going to the finish for a further interminable two minutes! — *Editor*.

Welcome to the Valley!

Richard Cooper became the first new member of Avon Valley Runners in the third millennium when he joined on 1 January 2001, four weeks before his 48th birthday. He was followed by **Josephine Davies** on 18 January, **Robert Barton** on 23 January, **Andrew Smith** on 1 February, **Derek Jarvis** on 13 March and **Tina Giles** on 29 March. Best wishes to all of you for *happy* times in the Valley — and *good* times in competition.

Membership is now estimated at around 115 — but the official count depends on how many have paid their subs: if *you* feel uncertain (or guilty!) about your status, contact treasurer Les Unsworth.

Milestones

In the quarter just beginning, three members graduate to the next significant age-groups: **Linda Unsworth** turns 45 on 5 April; **Vivien Toms** will be 55 on 3 May; and **Steve Crute** will be 45 on 18 May. Birthday greetings and happy hunting in your new categories. Remember, under the new club championship rules (see *Valley News* January) members are eligible for awards in both age-groups in the year in which they move up — after all, it's only fair that there should be some compensation for being a year older!

RESULTS: January-March

MON. 1 JAN. - Hangover 10K, Kewstoke: 39 Rose Barber (5th woman, 1st o-50) 44:38.

SUN. 7 JAN. - Wiltshire Cross-Country Championships, Salisbury - Boys u-16: 1 Sam Ghey 13:04.

SUN. 21 JAN. - Romsey 5M: 55 Rose Barber (5th woman, 1st o-50) 34:21, 246 Judy Farr (2nd woman o-55) 44:05, 252 Stan Farr 44:34.

Cotswold Canter: Iain Perry 53:18.

SUN 28 JAN. - Slaughterford 9M MT: 42 Bernie Hobbs 1:11:39, 43 Richard Hudson 1:11:40, 109 Alan Meadow 1:22:53, 164 Tony Bartlett 1:34:18, 195 Tracey Grigsby 1:48:30.

SUN. 11 FEB. - Lychett Manor 10M: Tony Griffith 1:27:07.

WED. 14 FEB. - Street 5K: 15 Richard Marsh 16:59.

SUN. 18 FEB. - Weston Tough 10M MT: 10 Richard Marsh 1:00:10, 22 Alistair Bartlett 1:03:04, 87 Bob Ellis 1:08:37, 97 Deane Smith 1:08:55, 142 Bernie Hobbs 1:11:48, 249 Ashley Leat 1:16:49, 334 Alan Meadow 1:20:11, 23w Rose Barber (2nd o-45) 1:21:04, 31w Denise Ellis 1:23:08, 48w Viv Toms 1:25:33, 55w Susie Phillips 1:27:50, 59w Joyce Field (1st o-55) 1:28:15, 106w Jan Hunt 1:35:06, 594 Tony Bartlett 1:35:54, 617 Stan Farr 1:38:31. **3M Fun Run**: 5 Luke Hobbs 22:10, 35 Judy Farr 26:00, 44 Jake Hobbs 26:54.

Avalon Cross-Country Relays, Bristol - Boys u-16: 3rd team - Sam Ghey (2nd fastest) 7:11 + Adam Ghey 7:42 + Richard Ayling 8:08 = 23:01.

SUN. 25 FEB. - Malta Marathon: Danny Kay 3:43.

Pewsey 10M: 39 Bernie Hobbs 1:08:13, 103 Mark Hayward 1:18:03, 107 Alan Meadow 1:18:16, 109 Anthony Hickson 1:18:38, 162 Tony Bartlett 1:31:26.

Bourton-on-the-Water 10K: 19 Brett Flook 34:44.

(Bramley 10M & 20M Road Races on this date were cancelled under restrictions imposed due to the foot-and-mouth epidemic, which also affected many other events during the quarter under review.)

SUN. 18 MAR. - Bath Half-Marathon: 55 Richard Marsh 1:16:41, 289 Richard Hudson 1:28:32, 328 Ted Rockliffe 1:29:26, 336 Neil Whitehead 1:29:38, 372 Les Unsworth 1:30:52, 388 Simon Reeves 1:31:20, 461 Bernie Hobbs 1:33:15, 536 Bob Sidwick 1:35:00, 591 Danny Kay 1:36:11, 647 Bernard Dunn 1:37:18, 791 Maurice Cockell 1:39:41, 867 Anthony Hickson 1:41:08, 948 Nigel Evans 1:42:06, 957 Chris Switzer 1:42:12, 1019 Mike Pratt 1:43:09, 1106 Ray Withey 1:44:18, 1150 Susie Phillips 1:45:03, 1345 Derek Jarvis 1:47:56, 1431 Joyce Field 1:49:13, 1492 Tina Vivian 1:50:17, 1556 Tony Griffith 1:51:14, 1820 Gill Brooke-Taylor 1:55:10, 2138 Kathryn Macrae 1:59:48, 2140 Alan Meadow 1:59:50, 2499 Ann Whittle 2:09:30, 2509 Tracey Grigsby 2:09:39.

Salisbury 10K: Deane Smith 39:18, Rose Barber (1st woman o-50) 44:59, Judy Farr 55:01, Stan Farr 58:11.

SUN. 25 MAR. - Bath University 5K: 45 Anthony Hickson (1st o-65) 20:58.

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

Rose best over-50 Englishwoman at 5K in 2000

The ranking lists of the British Veteran Athletics Federation for 2000 just published reveal that Rose Barber of AVR achieved joint third-best in the over-50 category for five kilometres. Bettered only by Jeannette Stephenson of Scotland (18:27) and Pat Gallagher of Wales (18:42), Rose's time of 19 minutes 44 seconds in the Yeovil race on 14 June last year was the best by an English over-50, equalled only by Carol Fereday of Newport Harriers in Wales.

Additional award-winners for 2000

The recipients of awards not published before the prizegiving party on 20 January, i.e. based on improvement and other factors, were as follows: "The Bomb" (for services to the club) - Susie Phillips; most improved male - Paul Turner; most improved female - Viv Toms; most outstanding over-50-year-old (Frank Allen Cup) - Rose Barber; most improved junior - Richard Ayling.

FIXTURES: April–July

APRIL

- Sun 22 London Marathon.
 Sun 29 Bournemouth Bay Half-Marathon, 10.00; Pensford 10K, 1.00; Shakespeare Marathon.

MAY

- Thu 3 BernCol 3 x 1.36M Relay, Clubhouse, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.
 Sun 6 Fontmell Magna 8M, 11.00.
 Mon 7 Bradford-on-Avon 3M, 2.30.
 Tue 8 Calne Relays, 7.30.
 Thu 10 Paarlauf (pairs relay), Clubhouse–Victory Field, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.
 Sun 13 Keynsham 10K, 11.00.
 Sat 19 Westwood 2.4M.
 Sat 26 Bath (Hilly) 10M, 11.00.
 Thu 31 Tom Roberts 5K Handicap, Clubhouse, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.

JUNE

- Sun 3 Crewkerne 9M, 10.00; Fairford 10K, 11.00; Poole 10K, 2.00.
 Sat 9 Broad Town 5M, 2.30; Norton Radstock Half-Marathon, 10.30.
 Tue 12 Calne Relays, 7.30.
 Sun 24 Warminster 10M, 10.30.
 Thu 28 Tom Roberts 5K Handicap, Clubhouse, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.

JULY

- Sun 1 Portland 10M, 11.00.
 Sun 8 New Forest 10M, 12.45; Charmouth 8M, 3.00.
 Sun 15 Bath 9M, 11.00; Salisbury 10M, 11.00.
 Thu 26 Tom Roberts 5K Handicap, Clubhouse, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.

Note: All events are subject to approval under current restrictions during the foot-and-mouth epidemic.

MEMORY LANE

The K&A towpath – then and now

When I first arrived in this area in 1977, the canal towpath that we all know so well was very different from the smooth, gravelled thoroughfare that it is today. For a start, the canal itself was a jungle of reeds interspersed by a few areas of murky, lily-choked water, with hardly a boat in sight. In setting out from the clubhouse we followed a path through shoulder-high nettles, weeds and grass, so narrow that it allowed single file only.

Then around 1978 as part of the countrywide renovation of canals by British Waterways and armies of volunteers, bulldozers cleared the jungle from Bradford to Avoncliff, leaving in its place a 10ft-wide swathe of mud nine inches deep — which for a couple of seasons made ideal cross-country terrain for Wessex and Avalon league races. Repairing leaks and rebedding the waterway went on piecemeal as funds allowed. When the stretch from Avoncliff to Limpley Stoke was scoured out and concreted, while the towpath was still an uneven, muddy track, and before the canal was refilled, we took to running along the smooth, banked bed for much of the way.

There were many gates and stiles along the towpath in those days, because local farmers used it as a convenient route for their cattle between fields, which added a different quality to the surface: if during a wet spell cattle had been churning it up, and it then dried out in the sun, the resultant corrugations were a severe test of the ankles. In the summer of 1979 I worked in Bath for a few months, and once or twice a week, having gone in by train in the morning, I would run up the hill from the city past the university, down Brass Knocker to Limpley Stoke, and join the towpath for the next seven or eight miles to Trowbridge. The opening ascent and descent, followed by the rough towpath, combined with the gates and stiles, all of which I took pride in vaulting, made it a worthwhile midweek run, and when I reached home after twelve miles of such variety I felt I'd really been somewhere. — *Tim N.*