



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

(68)

APRIL 2003

ADDITIONAL AWARDS FOR 2002

As usual, several club awards for 2002 made at the annual prizegiving party could not be announced in advance, so were not included in the January issue of *Valley News*.

THE BOMB (nickname of the engraved brass shellcase awarded for particular loyalty to the club): This went to **Joyce Field**, for her hard work and competence in organizing the Bromham 10-kilometre road race.

MOST IMPROVED ATHLETES – *Male: Derek Jarvis. Female: Sonya Stephens.*

FRANK ALLEN CUP (*outstanding over-50*): **Derek Jarvis.**

INJURY OF THE YEAR: **Stan Farr.**

Memory Lane

LOOKING BACK ON A RACE WITH A VIEW

If you have a long way to run — say, 35 miles — it helps if the surroundings are inspiring. Spectacular mountain scenery was a definite plus feature of the annual Bergville–Ladysmith road race in Natal. However, the race started at 6 a.m., before sunrise, so for the first few miles there was not much to be seen.

Bergville is a village or small town in the foothills of the 10,000ft Drakensberg. When I first ran the race in April 1969, just under 100 were at the startline, and in the predawn gloom it was not possible to see who was in the field. I found that after the first couple of miles there was only one runner ahead of me — Roland Davey of Durban's Savages Athletic Club — and he was drawing steadily away. I was soon also well clear of the third runner, and going well, so had leisure to glance to the left from time to time to see the first rosy touches of sunlight on the ramparts of the escarpment thirty or forty miles to the west.

In the crisp autumn air, with that uplifting view, I went well. Even when the sun came up to make conditions less ideal, with the help of the occasional sponge or drink from my second I continued to maintain a good pace, and was pleased to pass the standard marathon mark in 2 hours 48 minutes, then a personal best. With fewer than 100 runners spreading out over that distance, it was a lonely effort, and once a runner ahead was seen to be fading at all he became a target for his pursuers.

I did not have such encouragement from Davey, who was over a mile ahead in the second half of the distance, but in the last few miles I was overtaken by a Natal University student, Tom Purdon, while remaining safe in third place. Davey's time of 3 hours 32 minutes 22.7 seconds was a course record; Purdon finished in 3:42:08, and my own figures were 3:44:53. However, I received a tall trophy as the first novice in the event, and had put valuable miles under my belt in preparation for my best time in the 54-mile Comrades Marathon only five weeks later. And of course I had added to the store of memories which make long-distance running such a fascinating sport.

— *Tim N.*

This is your newsletter! Items for inclusion to: Tim Northwood, 45 Hilperton Rd, Trowbridge; Tel. (01225) 769929; tijono@riscali.co.uk

Reflections on Philosophy

by Tony Bartlett

1. Ponder anew the meaning of life —
Of war and famine, of pestilence and strife;
Think, too, of those who cherish you dear:
That helping hand, that listening ear.
2. Note well the ragged edge of utter despair,
Where there is no love, no one to care;
The hidden depths of filth and slime;
No thoughts of hope, no reason or rhyme.
3. When the tears of self-pity stain your cheek,
Be strong and resolute, not feeble or weak;
Suppress all your fears with the courage you lack,
From the faltering edge of eternity step back.
4. Look forward to morning's translucent light of day;
With the waking of dawn the poison ebbs away.
With grace, like the dark velvet cloak of night,
Prise open shuttered eyes with new sight.
5. Anchor your soul, secure and steadfast,
Out of the gloomy winter of your abject past,
For when you walk on the pathway where danger teems,
Tread softly, for you tread on your innermost dreams.
6. Pierce the thin veneer of all worldly things;
Rise out of the shadow where futility clings.
Comprehension for the present with your spirit will lie
With the intelligent wisdom of years gone by.
7. When illness or infirmity threatens your health,
The symbiotic relationship of Nature's wealth
Can turn you to revulsion, fury and distrust.
Banish now this maelstrom of thoughts to pure dust.
8. The whole race of mortals, all inhabitants of Earth,
The beginning of creation when the world first gave birth;
Immortal Creator who fashioned our heart:
Our embryonic origin, our worth, our start.
9. Observe the silvery glint of dawn,
Relish a new life, of a life new born;
Rise with the scending clouds of day
And breathe in the sun's first golden ray.
10. Linger no more to accept your fate —
Those twin arrows of destiny, Love and Hate;
But journey on upward in spiralling climb,
And seek out the naked truth of Time.

Secretary's Notes

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

So far, seven members have become eligible for Avon Valley Runners' championships for 2003. For the benefit of new members, this entails completing 10-kilometre, 10-mile and half-marathon races on certified courses. The total time of your best three performances will be your final championship time. You have until 31 December to improve your times. — *Stan Farr.*

Welcome to the Valley!

The membership list has received a quantum boost in the first quarter of 2003, with the addition of no fewer than fifteen new Avon Valley Runners: **Rachel Bown**, who joined on 23 January; **Charlotte Bright**, 13 February; **Michelle Clarke**, 25 February; **David and Elaine Cox**, 14 January; **Dylan Ellis**, 7 January; **Ben Hetherington**, 13 February; **Lorraine Humphreys**, 7 January; **Sally Jenner**, 13 March; **Becca Magee**, 4 February; **Genevieve Sharam**, 20 March; **Gary Thwaites**, 28 January; **Beverley Walters-Davies**, 13 February; **Hannah Wicheard**, 13 February; and **Steven Williams**, 5 February. Happy days and good times to all of you!

Milestones

Not many graduates to their next age-group in the quarter just beginning, but the march of time claims the following: **Gerry Fice**, who turns 50 on 16 May; **Brett Flook**, 40 on 30 May; **Sue MacGregor**, 45 on 4 May; and **Dennis Mellor**, 70 on 30 June. Look on it not so much as goodbye to a part of youth, as hello to a new opportunity. Good luck!

RESULTS: January-March

Apologies for the following omissions and error in *Valley News* January 2003:

OMITTED: **SUN. 24 NOV. - Florence Marathon:** V Toms 4:01:14. **Eynsham 10K:** 90 D Wrintmore 39:21.

ERROR: **SUN. 8 DEC. - Geneva 7-5K:** A Hickson was 14th out of 332 in the o-60 category in 31:45.

JANUARY

WED. 1 JAN. - Kewstoke 10K: 7 K Spacey 37:03, 20 Stuart MacGregor 40:21, 48 R Barber (3rd woman) 46:00, 52 G Phillips 46:33, 63 Sue MacGregor 49:27, 78 S Phillips (1st woman o-50) 52:20.

SAT. 4 JAN. - Wiltshire Cross-Country Championships, Devizes: Senior Men (10-K)- 28 R Ellis 42:28.

SUN. 12 JAN. - Stubbington Green 10K: 57 A Bartlett 37:04, 898 T Bartlett 1:05:56.

SUN. 26 JAN. - Romsey 5M: 136 R Barber (1st woman o-50) 35:23, J Farr (1st woman o-60) 43:59, I S Farr 46:06.

Slaughterford 9M MT: 42 R Ellis 1:07:24, 64 D Wrintmore 1:10:23, 76 I White 1:12:13, 109 N Whitehead 1:16:26, 218 D Hudson 1:28:26.

FEBRUARY

SUN. 2 FEB. - Blackmore Vale Half-Marathon: 22 M Connor 1:23:22, 150 D Kay (2nd o-60) 1:42:08.

Watford Half-Marathon: 324 D Jarvis 1:34:35.

SUN. 9 FEB. - Dursley Dozen (12M MT): 170 N Whitehead 1:45:08, 189 I White 1:46:24, 402 B White 2:13:50.

Avalon Cross-Country League: Senior Men - 8-4K: 27 R Ellis 35:22.

SUN. 16 FEB. - Weston Tough 10 MT: 44 M Connor 1:06:58, 50 R Ellis 1:07:29, 149 D Jarvis 1:14:16, 26(w) V Morey 1:19:44, 316 A Meadow 1:23:25, 54(w) D Ellis 1:27:27.

Lytchett 10M: M Brain 1:22:35.

SUN 23 FEB. - Malta Marathon: D Kay (2nd o-60) 3:37:38.

Bramley 20M: 254 J Rockcliffe 2:34:54, 411 D Hudson 2:48:49, 453 L Ringham 2:52:11, 571 V Toms 3:02:18.

Bramley 10M: 12 A Bartlett 1:00:40, 54 N Evans 1:11:32, 80 S Ringham 1:15:40, 81 C Howard 1:15:44, 87 N Yates 1:16:20, 93 G Phillips 1:17:02, 96 A Hickson (1st o-65) 1:17:26, 109 T Vivian 1:18:55, 134 Denise Ellis 1:20:47, 140 S Stephens 1:21:43, 148 Sue MacGregor 1:22:13, 174 J Scott 1:25:10, 252 T Griffith 1:33:04, 376 Stuart MacGregor 2:00:45.

Pewsey 10-9M MT: 55 M Connor 1:32:36, 78 I White 1:35:24, 166 B Magee 1:46:11, 284 B White 2:03:42, 334 T Bartlett 2:20:16, 342 Dylan Ellis 2:24:49.

Salisbury 10K: 57 R Barber (1st woman o-50) 45:11, 87 M Brain 49:41, 131 J Farr (1st woman o-60) 56:09, 132 I S Farr (& Helga, 1st dog) 56:26.

Babcary 6M: 6 K Sparey (2nd vet.) 45:21.

MARCH

SUN. 9 MAR. - Gloucester 20M: 161 N Yates 2:48:10, 251 V Toms 3:09:06.

Stowmarket 10M: 100 T Griffith (4th o-60) 1:31:17.

SUN. 16 MAR. - Bath Half-Marathon: 173 A Bartlett 1:24:00, 317 G Fice 1:29:19, 336 R Bown 1:29:49, 382 C Payton 1:31:11, 440 J Rockcliffe 1:33:14, 584 D Jarvis 1:36:22, 602 G Thwaites 1:36:39, 722 D Kay 1:38:37, 767 M Edwards 1:39:26, 772 N Whitehead 1:39:35, 773 T Rockcliffe 1:39:36, 818 C Howard 1:40:21, 995 T Vivian* 1:43:13, 1013 L Brown* 1:43:22, 1052 N Evans 1:43:57, 1071 L Ringham 1:44:14, 1082 P Hunt 1:44:26, 1089 S Noyes 1:44:30, 1094 S Ringham 1:44:31, 1141 A Hickson 1:45:17, 1171 Sue MacGregor* 1:45:48, 1200 G Phillips 1:46:18, 1259 R Magee 1:47:09, 1352 T Simpson 1:48:35, 1353 S Stephens* 1:48:35, 1656 S Phillips 1:52:54, 1910 J Scott 1:56:25, 3442 T Bartlett 2:35:14. *2nd women's o-40 team.

Calne Bowood 10K: M Connor 36:40, R Barber (2nd woman) 44:29, I White 45:08, M Hayward 45:28, B White 53:30, I S Farr (& Helga, 1st dog) 55:15, J Farr 55:50.

SUN. 23 MAR. - Springfield Duathlon: 50 R Barber (1st o-50) 5K run 22:53 + 20K bike 33:22 + 5K run 24:42 = 1:20:57.

Eastleigh 10K: 393 Les Unsworth 4:23, 741 Linda Unsworth: 54:48.

SUN. 30 MAR. - Chedworth Trails 10M MT: 271 Sue MacGregor 1:36:38, 275 Denise Ellis 1:37:00.

Marshfield Mudlark 5-5M MT: 39 A Hickson 49:36, 41 P Clark 49:54.

FIXTURES: April-July

APRIL

- Sun 13 London Marathon.
 Mon 21 Yeovil 10K, 11.00.
 Sun 27 Shakespeare Marathon, 1.00; Bournemouth Half-Marathon; Corsham 10K, 11.00;
 Penselwood 10K, 11.00; Frenchay 10K, 11.00; Marwell Zoo 10K, 10.30; Pensford 10K, 11.00.
 Tue 29 Calne Uphill Mile, 7.30.

MAY

- Sun 4 Sarsen Trail Marathon (Avebury-Stonehenge); Fordingbridge 10K, 11.00; Glastonbury 5-69M, 11.00.
 Mon 5 Springfield Triathlon; Christchurch (Bradford-on-Avon) 3M, 2.30.
 Sat 10 Bratton 11K, 11.00; Lyneham 10K, 11.00 (no entry on day).
 Sun 11 Cowpat Canter 6-5M, 11.00; Keynsham 10K, 11.00.
 Tue 13 Calne Relays, 7.30.
 Wed 14 Yeovil 5K, 7.15.
 Sun 18 Bridport 12-5K, 2.00.
 Thu 22 Springfield 5K, 7.00.
 Sat 24 Bath (Hilly) 10M, 11.00.
 Thu 29 Tom Roberts Handicap 5K, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.

JUNE

- Sun 1 Poole 10K, 2.00; Fairford 10K, 11.00.
 Sun 8 Crewkerne 9M, 10.00; Long Ashton 10K, 10.30; Bath Women's 5K, 7.00.
 Tue 10 Calne Relays, 7.30.
 Sat 14 Broad Town 5M, 2.30.
 Sun 15 Radstock Half-Marathon, 10.00; Salisbury 10M, 11.00; Neroche 10K, 10.30.
 Thu 19 Springfield 5K, 7.00.
 Sun 22 Swindon Women's 5K, 11.00.
 Sun 29 Portland 10M, 11.00.

JULY

- Sat 5 Golden Cap 8M, Dorset, 2.30.
 Tue 8 Calne Relays, 7.30.
 Wed 9 Chippenham 5K, 7.30.
 Sun 13 New Forest 10M, 12.45; Bath Three Hills MT, 11.00.

The Passing of a Tomcat

Darren Wrintmore

I left my house in Shaw at around 6.45 on a miserable morning and after a short warm-up I settled into my comfortable training pace and headed towards Melksham. After about a mile or so, I came across the dead body of a ginger tomcat. As I passed it, it suddenly registered: that was my cat! Faced with the dilemma of either cutting short my run or facing the wrath of my wife for leaving the cat, I thought of a compromise: I would run to the nearest phone box and call her to come and collect me and/or the cat.

Three reverse charges calls to the house were all greeted by our friendly answerphone message, but no one was coming to answer and I could sense that the operator's patience with me was starting to wear a little thin, so I was left with one option, to run back to the dead cat and return it home myself.

By this time the rain was lashing down fiercely and the cat had reached full *rigor mortis*. Not having an affinity for handling dead animals, I removed my long-sleeved running top and wrapped it around the cat's body. I then walked back up the A365, half naked, in the pouring rain, holding in front of me a dead ginger tomcat — what a sight I must have posed for passing drivers! On arrival back at the house, I opened the back door — to be greeted by my ginger tomcat, who looked very worried and scarpereed pretty sharpish!

I needed to take a shower and contemplate what to do now with the dead cat, as it obviously wasn't what I'd thought it was. Fortunately Tuesday is dustbin day in the Melksham area, but my suggestion of a wheelie-bin burial was greeted with an angry glare from both wife and ginger tom. "Take it to the vet's; at least they may be able to Identichip it and give some closure to its owner", said the voice of reason. So, with the dead cat still wrapped in the running top, I transferred it to a washing basket and drove it to the vet's.

Unfortunately at the vet's an early-morning queue had formed. A rather Pythonesque scenario developed, as owners with flop-eared bunnies, paraqueets and golden retrievers were joined by a rather embarrassed-looking man carrying a dead cat wrapped in an "Atlanta Superbowl Safari 5K" running top in a washing basket. "I don't think they'll be able to do much for him, mate," offered the owner of the flop-eared bunny. I was simply too stunned to reply, and just handed over the dead cat to the vet, commenting that it had "died whilst out running".