



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

(69)

JULY 2003

BECAUSE I CAN !

The 90K Comrades Marathon — by Viv Toms

The blade glinted in the harsh sunlight, poised menacingly above Barry's throat as he grappled frantically with our attackers. Screaming, I tried to wrestle my bag containing my precious Comrades number from the muggers' grasp, and as quickly as they appeared so they vanished, as two guardian angels in the shape of security guards appeared from a nearby shop. We had arrived in South Africa just three hours earlier and after visiting the exhibition decided foolishly to walk the few hundred yards back to our hotel instead of getting a taxi. Apart from ripping Barry's gold chain from his neck and emptying his pockets they left us unscathed, although badly shaken — not a promising start.

Five-thirty the following morning saw me shivering in the cold and dark of Pietermaritzburg, groggy through lack of sleep and surrounded by enormous Zulus all chattering excitedly in their native tongue. I felt very alone and vulnerable, with a feeling of dread at the challenge I had stupidly set myself. As "Chariots of Fire" blasted into the night and the traditional cock crowed three times I shuffled off, feeling dejected and miserable. I had not trained enough, I had been traumatized and gone without sleep for two nights due to our night flight and 2 a.m. rise to get to the start, and I now had to run for 56 miles!

By 6.30 the sun started to rise and so did my spirits. Running is so easy: you have only to remember to use alternate legs. Jogging slowly and steadily up and down the hundreds of hills, suddenly I was halfway and I felt good! Small sachets containing two mouthfuls of either water or Powerade were offered at every kilometre, and although the route was not as stunning as the Two Oceans [see report, *Valley News* 53, July 1999] it was very spectacular, and looking across the veld to the Valley of a Thousand Hills was breathtaking.

I started to suffer at 70 kilometres. (Stan had said you reach a certain level of pain and it doesn't get any worse. It does, Stan!) Everyone said how the downhills hurt your knees. I was running on red-hot coals, my calves were cramping, both my thighs and arms felt broken, my stomach was aching through constant vomiting — but my knees were fine!

Still, only 20km to go, and I was going to finish well under 11 hours. Then the sub-11-hour pacemaker passed me and so did truckload after truckload of runners who hadn't made the cut-off points in time or were too injured to continue. It was truly a battle of survival now, and I thought of the humiliation I'd feel if I didn't finish. The deadline had been extended to 12 hours, but I desperately wanted to beat the original 11-hour time for a bronze medal.

I caught up with the pacemaker and lost him several times before running into the stadium. I couldn't see the clock, but the time on my watch was 10:55 as I crossed the finish line and received my very insignificant bronze medal. It wasn't until I saw the results in the newspaper the next day that I realized that my bronze medal was in fact copper and my official time was 11 hours 2 minutes! I'd forgotten about the seven minutes getting through the start line. Oh well, there's always next year. . . .

(For the record, 13,374 runners started and 11,400 finished. My position was 8,937th.)

The Day that the Car Broke Down

by Tony Bartlett

1. One night after training I said to my mate:
"Let's find a new event, let's set a new date."
"Fair enough", he replied; "I'll let you choose."
It'll give you a chance to try your new shoes."
2. I studied the diary and perused it with care.
There must be a new race, I thought, somewhere out there.
I finally found one that seemed to suit well:
A tough multi-terrain over moorland and fell.
3. In the pub that next evening said my mate at the bar:
"That'll be OK, we will go in my car."
"Oh no", I protested, "it's too shabby a sight;
We will use mine because the engine's all right."
4. We set off at dawn in the pale morning sun.
A new race to conquer, a new distance to run.
We arrived at the venue with time plenty to spare.
The sunlight had brightened and all was set fair.
5. My mate started off at the loud hooter's sound,
Determined to go fast and make up good ground.
I followed on but gradually dropped back,
Through thick mud and bushes and overgrown track.
6. At last we had finished and no longer need roam;
We showered and changed and got ready for home.
But when in the car park as we prepared to depart
I turned on the ignition, the damned thing wouldn't start.
7. "We should have used mine", said my mate with a sneer.
"Then we wouldn't be so far away, stranded out here."
Eventually a telephone-box I at long last detected,
And called for the breakdown, utterly dejected.
8. They answered my call, and murmured "I say,
We'll be several hours yet, we've been busy all day."
So I looked at the handbook to try to acquire
The knowledge to connect any broken stray wire.
9. "I told you", said my mate with a grin and a smirk,
"We should have used mine" — the ungrateful berk.
"By the time we get home we'll be late to our bed."
If he says one more thing I'll punch his fat head.
10. The time dragged on and I became more irate:
This great mate of mine I was beginning to hate.
He said: "My car, we should have used, we'd not be in this jam."
I looked at his face, took aim, and went WHAM!

Secretary's Notes

With half of the year now behind us, we have fifteen members who have completed a 10-kilometre, 10-mile and half-marathon to qualify for the club championships. The lead in both men's and women's sections has changed hands several times, with Kevin Sparey and Tina Vivian only seconds ahead of their nearest rivals.

The first Tom Roberts Handicap of the year was a great success, mostly due to new members not having a clue as to what was in store for them.

It is hoped to hold the Over The Hills multi-terrain race on Sunday 12 October, as Tina Vivian and Sue MacGregor have kindly offered to act as race organizers with help from club members.

We wish AVR founder member Mike Hehir a speedy recovery from his recent illness. — *Stan Farr*

Welcome to the Valley!

New members during the past quarter include husband and wife **Hugh** and **Jo Pomroy-Smith**, who joined on 15 May — on the same day as **Michael Weller** and **Zoë Coombe**. **Susan Cook** signed up on 29 May. Welcome to all of you. May you enjoy many happy miles and good times in the Valley.

Milestones

There are five promotions to the next age-groups in the club during the three months just beginning. On 27 July **Mike Gerrish** is due to join the ranks of the over-60s, the same age-group as **Richard Hudson**, who will get there on 13 August. Only a day later another AVR will become an OAP when **Ron Whittle** celebrates his 65th on 14 August. **Colin Payton** will be 50 on 27 September, when he shares a birthday with **Mike Carpenter**, who will turn 55. It's only a number, you know, but it's also an opportunity to bag a few prizes!

RESULTS: April-June

SUN. 6 APR. - Taunton Marathon: 46 D Kay (1st o-60) 3:35:17; **Taunton Half-Marathon:** 232 G Thwaites 1:38:07, 619 T Griffith 1:59:10. **Trowbridge Lions' 10K:** 4 D Barber 36:43, 6 K Sparey (1st o-45) 37:32, 8 A Bartlett 37:44, 9 M Connor 38:23, 12 D Wrintmore 40:30, 21 M Edwards 44:59, 22 M Hayward 45:00, 23 V Morey (2nd woman) 45:20, 24 R Withey 45:42, 27 B Magee (4th woman) 46:14, 28 P Mitchell 46:15, 29 N Evans 46:39, 30 C Atkinson 46:39, 31 R Barber (1st woman o-45) 46:56, 32 A Hickson 47:15, 34 P Clark 48:02, 36 T Vivian 48:15, 39 M Carpenter 49:52, 44 R Sales 51:54, 45 J Betteridge 52:11, 47 J Scott 52:30, 53 V Toms 55:01, 59 D Mellor 58:25, 69 T Bartlett 1:07:49. **Totton 10K:** Sue MacGregor (42nd woman) 45:37.

WED. 9 APR. - Yeovilton 5K: 16 K Sparey 17:12, 38 M Bryant 19:14, 41 S Bryant 19:37.

SUN. 13 APR. - London Marathon: J Rockliffe (217th woman) 3:22:13, 3811 D Kay 3:30:03, 6349 D Hudson 3:47:30, L Ringham (973rd woman) 3:51:35, 14830 A Meadow 4:33:50, V Toms (3930th woman) 4:43:56, L Humphreys (7412th woman) 6:08:06.

FRI. 18 APR. - Maidenhead 10M: 385 Sue MacGregor 1:21:41.

SAT. 19 APR. - David Lloyd Quarter-Marathon, Boscombe: M Brain 51:09.

MON. 21 APR. - Yeovilton 10K: 16 K Sparey 36:50, 62 M Bryant 41:26, 85 D Kay 43:11, 105 R Barber (3rd woman o-50) 45:30, 116 Sue MacGregor 46:16, 141 S Phillips 48:40, 186 J Farr (2nd woman o-60) 55:25, 196 I S Farr (3rd o-65) 56:41.

SUN. 27 APR. - Shakespeare Marathon: 105 Les Unsworth 3:39:41, 159 N Yates 3:50:19, 170 D Kay 3:52:13, 330 P Hunt 4:22:42.

Bournemouth Half-Marathon: T Vivian* 1:45:16, Sue MacGregor* 1:48:26, M Brain 1:51:10, Denise Ellis* 1:59:01. *3rd women's team.

Penselwood 10K: R Barber (3rd woman) 47:30. **Pensford 10K:** 12 D Barber 39:00. **Corsham 10K:** 17 A Bartlett 36:36, 23 M Connor 37:0, 56 G Fice 40:17, 57 D Wrintmore 40:19, 79 M Bryant (2nd u-18) 41:42, 115 N Evans 43:41, 119 S Noyes 44:01, 147 D Jarvis 45:32, 158 B Magee 46:03, 162 A Hickson 46:12, 191 R Sales 47:53, 204 S Phillips 48:43, 298 Dylan Ellis 55:09, 303 D Mellor 56:02, 304 T Griffith 56:26, 307 J Farr 57:01, 312 I S Farr 57:32, 377 T Bartlett 1:08:14.

TUES. 29 APR. - Headington Hill Mile: 3 D Wrintmore 7:30.

SUN. 4 MAY - Neolithic Marathon: 49 D Kay 3:58:06, 84 L Ringham 4:13:47, 151 V Toms 4:48:50. **Glastonbury 5-69M:** 15 M Connor 34:16, J Farr 52:33, I S Farr 52:38. **Springfield Triathlon** (400m swim + 30K bike + 5k run): 172 J Betteridge 7:08 + 50:00 + 27:07 = 1:24:15, 205 Stuart MacGregor 8:08 + 49:27 + 29:08 = 1:26:43, 248 G Phillips 9:50 + 52:21 + 29:54 = 1:32:05.

MON. 5 MAY - Bradford-on-Avon 3M: 2 K Sparey 16:31, 4 A Bartlett 16:46, 5 D Barber 17:08, 11 N Whitehead 19:42, 13 R Barber (2nd woman) 20:32, 15 T Simpson 20:53, 16 R Sales 20:54, 18 P Clark 21:06, 21 B Hetherington (1st boy) 22:03, 24 S Phillips (3rd woman) 22:11, 33 D Mellor 25:17, 34 P Chapple 25:36, 37 I S Farr 26:09, 39 J Farr 26:49, 53 T Bartlett 30:58.

SAT. 10 MAY - Bratton Hilly 11-65K: 2 M Connor 44:59, 6 R Ellis 49:40, 10 S reeves 50:58, 17 I White 53:45, 25 A Hickson 55:44, 26 R Sales 56:02, 37 Sue MacGregor (1st female veteran) 58:15, 52 Denise Ellis 1:01:42, 64 V Toms 1:05:46, 65 I S Farr 1:05:46, 66 B White 1:06:00, 72 J Farr 1:11:57, 73 T Bartlett 1:18:08. 1st men's and women's teams. **Lyneham 10K:** 14 D Wrintmore 39:14, 40 M Bryant (1st u-18) 41:39, 66 V Morey (1st u-35 woman) 44:31, 69 R Barber 44:48, 98 S Phillips 47:47, 140 G Phillips 52:24. 1st women's team.

SUN. 11 MAY - Cowpat Canter: 17 M Connor 49:12, 45 A Hickson 53:15. **Keynsham 10K:** 197 M Edwards 47:15, 200 R Sales 47:18, 205 T Vivian 47:36.

TUES. 13 MAY - Calne Relays: 17 (3rd women's team) Liz Ringham 24:27 + Jan Betteridge 25:23 + Denise Ellis 25:30 = 1:15:20, 18 T Wood 23:23 + Viv Toms 28:35 + A Hickson 23:57 = 1:15:15.

WED. 14 MAY - Yeovilton 5K: 30 M Bryant 18:52, 31 S Bryant 19:07, 48 R Barber 20:50.

SAT. 17 MAY - Isle of Wight Marathon: 43 D Kay (2nd o-60) 3:39:29. **Westwood 2 1/2M:** 1 A Bartlett 13:33, 5 Sue MacGregor (1st woman) 17:00, S Phillips (1st female veteran) 17:33, 10 E Philpott (1st girl) 19:59, 11 I S Farr 20:26, 12 D Mellor (1st veteran) 20:38, 13 J Farr 21:17, 17 T Bartlett 26:04.

SUN. 18 MAY - Newton Abbot Marathon: 81 D Kay 4:23:10. **Swindon Duathlon:** 249 N Whitehead - 10K run 42:02 + 40K bike 1:26:47 + 5K run 23:57 = 2:34:46.

THURS. 22 MAY - Springfield 5K: 26 M Bryant 19:19, 31 C Maurissen (4th woman) 19:32, 110 T Grigsby 26:14.

SAT. 24 MAY - Bath Hilly 10M: 13 M Connor 1:04:24, 67 Rachel Bown (2nd-claim) 1:17:19, 68 Les Unsworth 1:17:23, 91 Sue MacGregor 1:23:50, 95 A Hickson 1:25:04, 117 S Phillips 1:32:49, 124 T Bartlett 1:56:41.

MON. 26 MAY - Thames Turbo Triathlon: 125 D Jarvis - 400m swim - 400m swim 14:34 + 25K bike 40:25 + 5K run 24:51 = 1:19:50.

TUES. 27 MAY - Lacock Relays: R Ellis 15:41 + T Rockliffe 17:58 + A Hickson 18:01 = 51:40.

THURS. 29 MAY - Tom Roberts 5K Handicap: 1 E Philpott, 2 H Pomroy-Smith, 3 S Noyes. Actual times: 1 A Bartlett 18:27, 2 M Connor 19:04, R Hudson 20:48, 4 M Bryant 20:57, 5 H Pomroy-Smith 22:02, 6 S Noyes 22:05, 7 D Jarvis 22:25, 8 N Evans 22:29, 9 M Brain 23:0, 10 R Sales 23:16, 11 A Meadow 23:27, 12 T Wood 23:41, 13 A Hickson 23:43, 14 M Hayward 24:02, 15 T Simpson 24:13, 16 S Phillips (1st woman) 25:03, 17 Denise Ellis 25:45, 18 J Pomroy-Smith 26:49, 19 E Philpott 27:23, 20 L Russell 29:17, 21 P Chapple 30:49, 22 S Cook 31:42, 23 G Sharam 31:58, 24 E Hobbs 34:09, 25 Tony Bartlett 35:47, 26 S Miluk 39:29.

FRI. 30 MAY - Altrincham 5K: 80 R Barber (3rd woman o-40) 21:47.

SUN. 1 JUNE - Lake Vyrnwy Marathon: 50 D Kay (1st o-60) 3:34:09. **Fairford 10K:** 19 D Barber 37:46, 98 Les Unsworth 43:40, 120 H Pomroy-Smith 44:59, 199 T Vivian 49:24, 258 S Phillips 52:32, 311 T Griffith 55:38, 336 J Farr (2nd woman o-55) 56:56, 340 I S Farr 57:12, 414 L Lewis 1:11:48. **Fairford 2M:** 77 Linda Unsworth 17:18. **Exmouth 10K:** 133 L Ringham 45:51, 161 S Stephens 48:33. **Poole 10K:** 316 Sue MacGregor (2nd o-45) 46:00, 372 M Brain 47:20. **Calne Triathlon** (400m swim + 20K bike + 5K run): 40 N Whitehead (1st o-55) 7:58 + 46:29 + 20:19 = 1:14:46, 54 J Betteridge 7:19 + 47:12 + 23:48 = 1:18:19.

WED. 4 JUNE - Castle Combe Duathlon: 81 N Yates - 2M run 14:30 + 10M bike 27:48 + 2M run 14:01 = 56:19.

SUN. 8 JUNE - Crewkerne 9M: 7 A Bartlett 56:18, 97 A Hickson 1:13:33, 177 T Bartlett 1:40:25. **Long Ashton 10K:** 9 K Sparey 37:37, 106 R Barber (1st woman o-50) 48:10.

TUES. 10 JUNE - Calne Relays (3 x 3-4M): 10th (2nd women's) team - L Ringham 24:19 + R Bown 22:03 + Sue MacGregor 23:32 = 1:09:54, 11th team - A Hickson 23:25 + R Sales 23:40 + T Wood 24:08 = 1:11:13, 13th team - Sonya Stephens 25:25 + T Vivian 25:11 + J Betteridge 5:35 = 1:16:11.

WED. 11 JUNE - Yeovil 5K: 20 K Sparey 17:07.

SAT. 14 JUNE - Broad Town 5M: 2 S Phillips (1st woman o-50) 74 I S Farr 45:10, 98 T Bartlett 55:00.

SUN. 15 JUNE - Norton Radstock Half-Marathon: 7 M Connor (3rd o-40) 1:23:28. **Salisbury 10M:** 7 K Sparey 1:02:55, 19 D Wrintmore 1:06:55, 49 Les Unsworth 1:15:45, 71 L Ringham (3rd woman) 1:19:38, 93 Sue MacGregor 1:23:14, 121 M Pratt 1:29:05, 125 T Griffith 1:29:45, 152 D Mellor 1:36:43.

MON. 16 JUNE - Comrades Marathon 90K (Pietermaritzburg-Durban): 8,937 V Toms 11:02:41 [see report, p. ?].

THURS. 19 JUNE - Springfield 5K: 23 M Bryant (1st junior) 19:20, 96 T Grigsby 26:04.

TUES. 24 JUNE - Lacock Relays: T Rockliffe 17:52.

THURS. 26 JUNE - Nailsea 10K: 10 K Sparey 35:55.

SUN. 29 JUNE - Horndon-on-Hill 10K: 131 T Simpson 48:41.

For inclusion in *Valley News*, *Wiltshire Times* and *The Book*, send results to Stan Farr, 01225 755605, or avonvalleyrunners@yahoo.co.uk.

FIXTURES: July-October

JULY

- Sun 20 Tarrant Monkton 10M & 5M, 10.30; Gloucester Half-Marathon, 10.30.
 Sat 26 Swanage 12M, 11.00
 Thurs 31 Tom Roberts 5K Handicap, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.

AUGUST

- Sun 3 Sturminster Newton Half-Marathon & 5K, 10.30.
 Wed 6 Castle Combe Duathlon; Pewsey 5M, 7.30.
 Sun 10 Lambourn 5M, 10.00.
 Tues 12 Calne Relays, 7.30.
 Wed 13 Yeovil 5K.
 Thurs 14 AVR Paarlauf, Bradford-on-Avon.
 Sun 17 Standish 10M, 11.00.
 Thurs 21 Corsham 5K, 7.00.
 Sun 24 Pewsey Half-Marathon, 10.30; Langport 10K, 11.00.
 Sun 31 Malmesbury Triathlon; Haresfield Beacon 10K, 11.00; Corfe Castle Beast --M MT, 10.30.

SEPTEMBER

- Wed 3 Castle Combe Duathlon.
 Sun 7 Bristol Half-Marathon, 9.30; Oldbury 10M, 10.30; Wansdyke Triathlon.
 Wed 10 Yeovil 5K, 7.15.
 Sun 14 Warminster 10M, 10.30.
 Thurs 18 Corsham 5K, 7.00.
 Sun 21 New Forest Marathon & Half-Marathon, 11.00; Great North Run (half-marathon); Shepton Mallet 10K, 10.30; Cirencester 10K, 10.30; King Alfred's Torment, 11.00.
 Sun 28 Taunton 10K, 11.00.

OCTOBER

- Sun 12 AVR Over The Hills MT (provisional).
 Sat 18 Weymouth 10M, 12.00.
 Sun 19 Abingdon Marathon, 9.00; Salisbury 8K Cross-Country, 11.00.

The Meaning of Life

by VIV TOMS

(with apologies to Tony Bartlett — see "Reflections on Philosophy", Valley News, April 2003)

Life is just a bowl of cherries:
 Chill out and eat a bar of Terry's.
 When life is doom and you curse Fate,
 Just sit down — eat chocolate!

Then when you feel dumpy and fat and lumpy,
 Get off your bum and go for a run!
 You've got to have a laugh when you're running to Barf,
 Dying for a pee and a nice cup of tea!

Running at a cracking pace, the rain bashing at your face,
 No time to stand and stare
 While the wind is in your hair,
 Or contemplate your navel while chewing on a bagel.

Tony's poem might be more profound,
 But he didn't mention the hours you pound
 The streets and the towpath, the soak in the bath,
 The blisters and sweat, and getting home wet!

And when you get a brilliant PB
 That's the meaning of life for me!
 (Just don't mention London.)