



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

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SOONER OR LATER EVERY RUNNER ASKS:

Why am I doing this?

Mike Brain

Reading Viv Toms's account [*Valley News* July 2003] of her gruelling 90K [Comrades Marathon] run in South Africa prompted me to put pen to paper regarding my recent participation in the New Forest 10-mile race on 13 July.

It's not as if I didn't have any experience of doing this race, because I'd done it several years ago when I lived in Poole. The problem is that the race starts at 12.45 p.m., and once again the gods determined the day to be a roasting 30°C. Why the organizers choose this start time, rather than, say, 11 a.m., God only knows!

Anyway, I thought, I'll take it nice and steady, take a water-bottle with me and I'll be okay. Also, the organizers had told us that there were three water stations en route, which was good to hear. For the first three miles there was no shade whatsoever — we were following a track through countryside like the vast plains of Arizona. The sun was beating down relentlessly and I said to myself, Why am I doing this? The prospect of doing another seven miles was not only daunting — it seemed totally ridiculous!

Despite all my best efforts, I actually started to walk, and even thought of stopping altogether. Me — Mike Brain — who'd done five marathons! The funny thing was that I'd earlier passed Viv and said to her, "Come on, Viv, after your marathons, this should be a stroll in the park for you!" Then when Viv passed me at four miles, she said, "Come on, Mike, this should be a stroll in the park for you!"

Well, that stung me into action. I'll run with her, I thought, and she'll keep me going. That didn't last long — 200 yards farther on my brain said to me again, Why am I doing this?

At four and a half miles I drew level with a young chap who looked very unstable as he ran. The reason was immediately clear: his right leg from the knee downwards was set at an angle. I felt quite humble. Here I was, thinking about stopping, when I had two good legs, and this guy had the guts to run with his handicap. So I introduced myself, and he became my pacemaker.

In the next five and a half miles he fell over five times. The track was often bumpy and uneven, and several times he suddenly caught his foot on a stone and tumbled over. Despite grazing his arm, he just got back to his feet and, laughed, and said, "I'm quite used to doing this." His final effort to sprint across the grass to the finish, where he couldn't hurt himself if he fell, was causing a rush of adrenaline. The sudden increase in stride made him even more unstable, and he fell over again! After I persuaded him to take it easy with smaller strides, we made it to the finish, where he outsprinted me to the line! [*See Results, page 3.*]

ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE

(if you're thinking of giving it all up)

by Tony Bartlett

1. To commonsense and logic my ear I must bend,
To retirement from running I must reluctantly bend.
No more of this torture can I allow —
No more, no more, not now.
2. No more will I run down a country lane
In driving snow or misty rain,
Pressing onward through stabbing shards of pain,
With hope in my heart, some advantage to gain.
3. Shinsplints and blisters and blackened toes —
I'll suffer no longer any of those;
No more sweat on my furrowed brow —
No more, no more, not now.
4. Those cramping aches, those dodgy knees —
No more will I endure any of these;
The back pain, the sprains, the laborious toil,
From all of these now I totally recoil.
5. No stretching and bending on the clubhouse floor,
So eager to start, to exit the door,
And run down the track 'neath the leafy bough —
No more, no more, not now.
6. This activity now I'll no longer pursue;
To rules and regulations I'll no more pay due.
I'll not enter races on the flat or uphill,
Because other interests will appear my time to fill.
7. No more trophies to win, no victories to boast:
These pleasures I'll leave to those who deserve most;
All honours and glories to others I endow —
No more, no more, not now.
8. I'll stand at the roadside and cheerfully wave
To former colleagues so foolhardy yet brave.
No more will I join them, for the magic I've lost;
It's their burden now, as they'll find to their cost.
9. No longer will I wear the AVR vest,
With yellow and green emblazoned on chest;
But my friends won't agree, so, to avoid a big row,
I'll retract all my plans, no more, not now.
10. So with these negative thoughts I just cannot live:
I'll advance and continue, be positive;
I'll arise like the phoenix from the ashes, I vow —
I'll go for it, go for it, go for it now!

Secretary's Report

THE TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGING: My recent club record of 2 hours for 10 miles (no Avon Valley Runner has ever run that slowly) brought back memories of my first-ever "10" over forty years ago. It was the tough Weymouth "10", and I finished near the back of the field in 1:01:22, with the last man coming in at 1:06:13. In fact, there was a runner competing at various races in the south who would regularly finish in about seventy 70 minutes, enduring considerable abuse from officials in the process. Thanks to the jogging boom and more tolerant officials, runners like me can still compete in races.

The CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS are now reaching an exciting stage, especially the women's, which has had three different leaders in the past month.

The BROMHAM 10K is now going ahead on Sunday 14 December under the leadership of Joyce field. A handful of helpers will be required, although the PTA are supplying the marshals.

CROSS-COUNTRY: With the demise of the Avalon cross-country league, the club has entered the Wessex league. Just turn up with club vest, no entry fee required, details from the Secretary.

Finally, I have to notify members of a coach going to the HAYLING ISLAND "10" on Sunday 30 November, the fare being about £5. Names to Ted Rockcliffe or myself. — *Stan Farr*

Welcome to the Valley!

Four new names have appeared on the membership list during the past three months: **Laurie Irwin** joined on 31 July, **Andrew Figini** on 5 August, and **Liz Harding** and **Paul Syms** both on 17 September. Best wishes to all of you for happy running (and good times) in the Valley.

MILESTONES

New member **Paul Syms** became an over-40 veteran on 23 June, only three months before he joined. Those who will move up into the next age-group during the quarter just beginning are: **Nick Johnson**, who'll be 40 on 3 December, and **Julia Scott**, also 40, on 23 December. Good luck to all of you in your new categories.

RESULTS: July–September

[Sat. 21 June – **BLACKPOOL HALF-MARATHON** (omitted from previous issue): 305 T Vivian (5th woman o-45) 1:42:52.]

Wed. 2 July – CASTLE COMBE MONSTER DUATHLON (2M run, 10M bike, 2M run, 10M bike, 2M run): 75 N Yates 14:09 + 26:37 + 15:21 + (no times for last 2 legs) = 1:37:00, 103 N Whitehead 13:48 + 29:36 + 14:25 + (no times for last 2 legs) = 1:41:11.

Sat. 5 July – GOLDEN CAP 8M MT, Dorset: T Vivian, Sue MacGregor 1:20:46.

Sun. 6 July – THRUXTON 10K: 30 Les Unsworth 42:52, 77 Linda Unsworth 52:14.

Wed. 9 July – SWANSEA 5K: 82 D Wrintmore 19:32.

Thu. 10 July – CHIPPENHAM 5K RIVER RUN: 30 D Wrintmore 19:57, 35 R Bown 20:26, 68 R Barber 22:19, 69 R Sales 22:23, 75 A Hickson 22:45, 99 S Phillips 24:03. **YEOVIL 5K**: 14 K Sparey 16:54, 37 M Bryant (1st jnr) 19:11, 42 S Bryant 19:27.

Sat. 12 July – BISHOPS CANNINGS 5-6K: 6 R Ellis 22:38, 29 S Phillips 28:48, 47 D Mellor 34:05, 51 I S Farr 35:43 [Helga 38:42].

Sun. 13 July – BATH THREE DOWNS 9M MT: 5 A Bartlett (2nd snr) 5:10, 17 M Connor 59:54, 53 A Hickson 79:56. **NEW FOREST 10M**: 237 L Ringham 1:21:02, 315 S Stephens 1:25:01, 345 M Pratt 1:27:18, 446 V Toms (1st woman o-55) 1:33:35, 471 M Brain 1:35:59.

Sun. 20 July – TARRANT MONKTON 10M 494y: 7 K Sparey (2nd vet.) 1:02:46, 29 R Ellis 1:11:09, 95 A Hickson 1:29:18, 114 S Phillips 1:34:26, 120 V Toms 1:37:24, 132 D Mellor 1:43:16; **5M 494y**: 3 B Flook 35:05, 13 R Barber (2nd woman) 41:43, 28 D Ellis 47:50, 35 J Field 49:28, 43 I S Farr (Helga 2nd dog) 53:32, 49 J Pomroy-Smith 55:20. **BATH TRIATHLON – Sprint** (750m swim, 20K bike, 5K run): 16 C Maurissen (1st woman, 1st jnr) 10:59 + 49:28 + 23:30 = 1:23:57, 95 J Betteridge 14:06 + 53:01 + 29:01 = 1:36:08, G Phillips 19:25 + (remaining details not known); **Olympic** (1,500m swim, 40K bike, 10K run): N Whitehead (1st o-55) 31:43 + 1:35:06 + 48:44 = 2:55:33.

Wed. 23 July – LACOCK RELAYS x 2½M: Les Unsworth 17:13, D Jarvis 17:18, A Hickson 17:42, L Ringham 18:16.

Sat. 26 July – SWANAGE 12M: 11 M Connor 1:13:57, 127 V Toms (1st woman o-55) 1:43:04, 152 D Mellor 1:54:09, 155 I S Farr 2:05:49.

Sat. 2 August – FIONNAY-PANOSIERE 7-5K: 250 A Hickson 1:33:43.

Sun. 3 August – STURMINSTER NEWTON HALF-MARATHON: 10 K Sparey 1:20:04, 55 B Flook 1:31:46, 196 S Phillips 2:03:43; **5K**: G Phillips 25:45.

Tue. 5 August – ILFRACOMBE 2½M: 2 R Ellis 17:15.

Wed. 6 August – PEWSEY 5M: 9 M Connor 30:03, 68 T Vivian (2nd woman o-45) 38:54, 72 P Mitchell 39:16.

Sun. 10 August – DROITWICH TRIATHLON (400m swim, 25K bike, 5K run): 158 R Barber (1st woman o-50) 9:41 + 47:02 + 26:54 = 1:23:37.

Tue. 12 August – CALNE 3 x 3-4M RELAYS: T Wood 22:51 + Sue MacGregor 23:47 + Les Unsworth 23:14 = 1:09:52; L Ringham 24:19 + V Toms 28:01 + J Field 29:02 = 1:21:22.

Sun. 17 August – STANDISH 10M: 127 S Phillips 1:34:47.

Sun. 24 August – PEWSEY HALF-MARATHON: 5 M Connor 1:23:26, 84 L Ringham 1:42:45, 85 Les Unsworth 1:42:52, 120 G Thwaites 1:48:56, 190 V Toms 2:04:13. **LANGPORT 10K**: 11 K Sparey 35:24, 26 A Bartlett 37:53, 191 S Phillips (1st woman o-50) 50:30, 229 D Cox 54:14, 240 J Farr 55:16, 251 J Field 56:17, 264 J Hunt 57:11, 281 I S Farr 59:43, 314 T Bartlett 1:10:17.

Mon. 25 August – SOUTHWICK 3M: 12 R Sales 20:38, 13 L Irwin 20:41, 14 S Phillips (2nd woman) 22:12, 15 T Northwood 23:33, 20 G Sharam (3rd woman) 27:54, 25 T Bartlett 33:09. **HAMPTON TURBO TRIATHLON** (438m swim, 21K bike, 5K run): D Jarvis 13:07 + 38:37 + 23:35 = 1:15:19.

Sun. 31 August – CORFE CASTLE BEAST 13M MT: 28 M Connor 1:33:24, 266 L Irwin 2:10:54, 312 S Phillips 2:16:18, 328 V Toms 2:18:55. **MALMESBURY TRIATHLON** (280m swim, 20K bike, 5K run): 53 R Barber (1st woman o-50) 7:15 + 38:05 + 22:50 = 1:08:10.

Sun. 7 September – WOLVERHAMPTON MARATHON: D Kay 3:51:58. **WANSDYKE TRIATHLON** (400m swim, 25K bike, 5K run): 135 J Betteridge 7:14 + 55:30 + 30:41 = 1:33:25, 136 D Jarvis 10:54 + 53:23 + 29:12 = 1:33:29, 155 T Rockliffe 10:24 + 55:31 + 29:35 = 1:35:30, 161 Stuart MacGregor 8:02 + 57:18 + 30:44 = 1:36:04, 197 D Green 8:54 + 1:00:11 + 32:29 = 1:41:34, 200 G Phillips 9:53 + 59:44 + 32:24 = 1:42:01, 217 T Vivian 9:02 + 1:06:13 + 30:45 = 1:46:00, 247 J Field (1st woman o-60) 8:23 + 1:13:47 + 35:29 = 1:57:39, 263 V Toms 12:06 + 1:30:57 + 34:31 = 2:17:34. **BRISTOL HALF-MARATHON**: 16 R Barber 1:25:12, 197 D Wrintmore 1:26:13, 650 C Payton (Bath, 2nd-claim AVR) 1:35:45, 794 N Evans 1:37:30, 1030 C Atkinson 1:40:15, 1120 M Edwards 1:41:25, 1206 Sue MacGregor 1:42:11, 1327 C Howard 1:43:19, 1350 L Brown 1:43:31, 1352 S Noyes 1:43:33, 1962 L Irwin 1:48:26, 1977 P Hunt 1:48:31, 1978 D Hudson 1:48:33, 3435 J Scott 1:58:36, 3770 S Jenner 2:00:52, 5619 Dylan Ellis 2:18:03, 5624 M Clarke 2:33:35, 6207 T Simpson 2:34:44.

Wed. 10 September – YEOVIL 5K: 31 B Flook 18:25, 39 M Bryant 19:06, 43 S Bryant 19:28.

Sun. 14 September – ROBIN HOOD MARATHON: D Kay 3:47:37; **HALF-MARATHON**: K Sparey 1:20:29. **WARMINSTER 10M**: 5 M Connor* 1:04:07, 7 D Barber* 1:04:33, 9 D Wrintmore* 1:07:02, 40 M Hayward 1:20:12, 43 R Sales 1:22:04, 50 A Hickson 1:23:47, 52 L Irwin 1:24:24, 58 Linda Unsworth† (1st woman o-45) 1:26:29, 61 S Phillips† 1:27:20, 65 Denise Ellis† 1:28:29, 68 V Toms (1st woman o-55) 1:29:59, 69 G Phillips 1:29:59, J Field 1:34:10, 79 J Hunt 1:37:12, 80 D Cox 1:39:27, 81 J Cox 1:39:33, 82 D Mellor 1:40:37, 91 I S Farr (& Helga, 1st dog) 2:00:39. *1st men's team; †1st women's team.

Sun. 21 September – NEW FOREST MARATHON: D Kay (3rd o-60) 3:40:56, D Mellor 4:40:24; **HALF-MARATHON**: Denise Ellis 1:52:14, M Pratt 1:55:22. **KING ALFRED'S TORMENT**: 5 A Bartlett 47:36, 27 I White 55:33, 95 B White 1:11:02, 115 T Bartlett 1:22:59. **SHEPTON MALLET 10K**: 3 K Sparey (1st vet.) 36:22, 4 D Barber 37:36, 28 R Barber* (3rd woman, 1st vet.) 45:55, 32 L Irwin 47:01, 42 S Phillips* 50:01, 68 J Farr* 56:58, 77 G Sharam 1:02:15, 78 I S Farr (& Helga, 1st dog) 1:02:18. *1st women's team. **SWANSEA 10K**: 137 D Wrintmore 39:21, 302 D Jarvis 43:01, 437 Sue MacGregor 45:35.

Sun. 28 September – CARDIFF MARATHON: 124 D Kay 3:26:59, 150= Les Unsworth & L Ringham 3:32:09, 388 V Toms (2nd woman o-55) 4:12:40; **HALF-MARATHON**: 230 Stuart MacGregor (2nd o-45) 1:41:20, 248 S Ringham 1:42:20, 448 S Stephens 1:50:53, 851 M Clarke 2:11:42. **OLDBURY 10M**: 6 K Sparey (3rd vet.) 58:24, 25 A Bartlett 1:03:43, 122 M Edwards 1:15:23, 137 T Vivian 1:16:12, 153 P Hunt 1:17:43, 168 S Phillips 1:19:56, 196 G Phillips 1:23:42.

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

FIXTURES: October-January

OCTOBER

- Sun 19 Over the Hills 12K, Bradford-on-Avon, 11.00.
 Sun 26 Springfield Duathlon; Stroud Half-Marathon, 10.00; Fordingbridge 10M, 11.00;
 Dorset Three Peaks, 10.30.

NOVEMBER

- Sun 2 Salisbury Half-Marathon, 11.00; Ilminster 10K & 5K, 10.30;
 Sat 8 Cheddar Half-Marathon, 1.30; Bath Victoria Park 4M, 11.00.
 Sun 9 Sodbury Slog, 11.00; Avebury 8M MT.
 Sun 16 Wimborne 10M, 10.30.
 Sun 30 Hayling Island 10M, 10.00; Brent Knoll 5½M, 11.30.

DECEMBER

- Sun 7 Wyvern 10K Christmas Cracker, 11.00.
 Sun 14 Bromham 10K, 11.00.
 Fri 26 Boxing Day 5K, The Beehive, Bradford-on-Avon, 11.30.

JANUARY

- Thu 1 Kewstoke 10K, 11.00.
 Sat 3 Wiltshire Cross-Country Championships, Salisbury.

A Little 'Local' History

TIM NORTHWOOD

On arrival in this area from South Africa via Tipperary, Ireland, in 1977, I set about occupying my evenings to pursue various interests. For example, I enrolled in an arts course at the College, joined Trowbridge Philharmonic Choral Society, and made enquiries to meet local distance runners, soon becoming a member of Trowbridge Athletic Club. What struck me about all these mostly evening activities was that within minutes after completion the participants had all vanished back into the night on their way home. As a result, one of my prime motives for participation, meeting people, was not over-successful.

However, at least in the sphere of running, this changed — and I have been held by some to blame for the now obligatory visit to a local hostelry after conclusion of the evening's exercise. In fact, it is not true that members have to register at the training venue to be allowed to slake their thirst at The Beehive. But in the days before 1986 when those of us who were later to become founder members of AVR still competed in the dark green and white of Trowbridge AC, it was only when someone was leaving or getting married that we broke our abstinence to drink his (it was usually his) health in The Dog & Fox or The Three Horseshoes.

My part in the change came in 1984 when in a search for better pay I was offered a job in Bournemouth with *The Dorset Evening Echo*. I accordingly invited clubmates to send me off over a few drinks in The Three Horseshoes; but because for different reasons like shift-work some were unable to attend on the first Thursday evening, the function was repeated the following week. Meanwhile, I was having difficulty in finding accommodation in Bournemouth as congenial as the large flat I occupied in Trowbridge at a rent which would not swallow up the promised increase of pay. I had increasing misgivings about the move, and remaining in Wiltshire among tried and trusted friends in familiar surroundings became more and more attractive. My job at the Wiltshire Times had been taken immediately following my resignation, but I was able to find work with a local typesetter, the late Vernon Drake, and so was able to remain in the town and continue as a member of Trowbridge AC.

My clubmates seemed very pleased that I was staying, and the following Thursday found us back in The Three Horseshoes for the third week in succession — this time to celebrate my *not* leaving. Somehow, it seemed like a good idea, and the practice of adjourning to the local after Thursday evening training became firmly established.

When in January 1986 we formed Avon Valley Runners, determined to keep matters as informal as possible, our weekly gathering in The Three Horseshoes just happened on the first Thursday of each month also to be the committee meeting. We later moved club headquarters to The Bunch of Grapes (I think a couple of pence less for a pint of ale was the deciding factor), where Clive Crocker's hospitality was so unstinting that we elected him a vice-president. We were naturally concerned when for health reasons he had to give up the Grapes, but delighted when he recovered so well as to seek another pub, and along with many of his former customers we unhesitatingly migrated to The Beehive. Picking up where we'd left off, the happy relationship thrived, and long may it continue!