



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS (73) JULY 2004

Plastic never tasted so good!

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOUR-DAY 120KM SAHARA CHALLENGE

by *Liz Ringham & Viv Toms*

“GOT A FULL BLADDER, VIV?” Liz’s voice echoed out of the dark when we met for an early-morning run to try out our Camelbacks — which, as the name suggests, were backpack diaphragms containing water which could be sipped through plastic tubes. The water tasted disgusting. . . . *Some time later*, after many miles of running across the desert, it was the most delicious drink we had ever tasted!

It started badly when *we* arrived in Tunisia but Liz’s luggage stayed in Rome (it was, after all, an Italian-organized trip!). After several offers of knickers and tee-shirts, it finally arrived a couple of days later, just in time for the first race on Friday 12 March. As this started by climbing over a mountain range and our friend Kenwynne “did not do edges or heights”, Viv agreed to run with her to stop her throwing a wobbly. Liz, however, came second in that first 24-kilometre leg from CHININI to GARAT EDDOURI, and there was no stopping her after that.

After Saturday’s 25 kilometres which took competitors to Pozzo Camp, it emerged that Kenwynne “did not do dark” either, so Viv agreed to run with her again on the 8 p.m. 10-kilometre nocturnal section, which was marked with anti-wind torches. This earned them a special prize for being “eccentric British women who were heard singing in the middle of the night in the middle of the desert”.

As the challenge progressed, through 35 kilometres on Sunday from Pozzo to Aquinet Essbat, the terrain became more and more desert-like, and by the last day’s 26 kilometres from Aquinet Essbat to Ksar Ghilane we were scrambling up and down sand dunes so fine that it was like running in flour. This last race ended at an oasis where we bathed in hot springs and slept in beds. *Bliss!*

The organization was fantastic. At the end of every one of the five races, we ran through an inflatable archway to find our berberi (Bedouin) tents erected, and after communal stretching exercises we adjourned to the restaurant tent for a three-course meal with wine. Only the Italians would provide wine in a Muslim country in the scorching heat of the desert!

Liz never relinquished the second place she had achieved in the first race, and brought home a magnificent trophy in the form of a sand rose. We both ran marathons during the following month — Liz in London and Viv in the Neolithic [*see Results, Page 3*], and they were a doddle! The moral of the story is: if you want to think running a marathon is a piece of p—s, run the Sahara first! * * * * *

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

Serenade of the Sahara

by Tony Bartlett

1. There is a race, so I've been told,
Just for the foolhardy, or maybe the bold:
It's out in the desert where the camels still roam —
A long way from England, our natural home.
2. Two AVR ladies with minds both alike
Decided to try this formidable hike.
Out from the airport the journey began,
Hoping to do well and be not also-ran.
3. A race of some magnitude, never attempted before:
Five different distances; days allowed, four.
This, then, the challenge which they both undertook.
What odds would you give in a betting-shop book?
4. The necessary equipment of sunglasses and cream —
Essential requirements for an impossible dream;
Snake-venom antidote, in case of a bite;
In temperatures soaring, high as bird's circling flight.
5. Other nations are present in the scorching heat,
As our gallant girls keep going on their neat little feet.
"Beware of scorpions!" was the warning cry:
"The sting's quite severe and could cause you to die."
6. One race was at night, beneath twinkling star;
So many miles to go now to the finish afar.
Running by torchlight and the pale desert moon;
Surely completion will arrive for us soon.
7. Sleep was achieved in a Bedouin-built tent;
An air of the dramatic most evident.
Breakfast next morning of sheeps' eyes and maize,
To start you off right in the sun's morning haze.
8. Finally now the finish draws near,
And our girls have conquered the mounting fear
Of not completing this most arduous course;
Their smiles shining through with no hint of remorse.
9. At last it's all over, and they've made many a friend;
Somehow it's a pity that it's come to an end,
Returning home to universal acclaim:
We know who they are, so I won't name a name.
10. "So what's next?" I ask this indefatigable brace.
(Perhaps Matterhorn, or the Eiger's North Face?)
Their exploits recorded for each intrepid dame;
Indelibly etched in the AVR Hall of Fame.

Secretary's Report

I would like to get the politics out of the way first. We are a club that just wants to run, drink and go on exotic running holidays. Now there is a move by the Athletics Association to get every club to pay a registration fee for every member on its books. So far Southern Counties is the only area to vote against this proposition, but neighbours City of Bath AC are in the Midland Counties, who have imposed a £3 surcharge on each member. As we consider the charge to be of benefit only to track clubs we will continue to vote against it.

For members who are interested, we have again joined the Wessex Cross-Country League for all ages and categories, starting in October, with six meetings over the six-month season. The courses are all different and make an interesting change from road racing. Entry is free, as the club pays an affiliation fee. All you need to do is turn up wearing a club vest.

Tina and Sue, as organizers of our Over the Hills multi-terrain race on Sunday 7 November, are looking for as many helpers as possible, so mark the date in your diary and come along to help us raise hundreds of pounds for charity, as we did last year.

Congratulations to our ladies, who in the last few weeks have won team prizes in the Bratton 11K, the 32-mile Dartmoor Discovery, and the Puddletown 20K. I would like to remind members of Rule 222, which states that "club vests must be worn in team competition". This is a rule rarely enforced, but be on your guard. — *Stan Farr.*

Welcome to the Valley!

This year's influx of new members has continued, with eight keen runners signing on during the past three months: **Joanne Mumford** on 4 May, **Mike & Tanya Maidment** on 6 May, **Benedicte Enbom-Crofts** on 10 June, **Tina Giles, Kevin & Linda Ladner** and **Kathryn Reckless** all on 27 June. We wish you all many miles and good times in "Happy Valley"! (Incidentally, at the beginning of 2004 the proportion of male to female members was a healthy 63.4% to 36.6%, reflecting the friendly, sociable atmosphere which has always prevailed in AVR.)

MILESTONES

Only three members come up for promotion to the next age-group during this quarter: **George Henderson**, 55 on 14 July; **Rosemary Barber**, 55 on 24 August; and **Steven Williams**, 50 on 15 September. Happy trophy-hunting!

RESULTS: April-June

LATE RESULT: Fri.-Mon. 12-15 March – SAHARA CHALLENGE 120K, Tunisia (five races in four days): Liz Ringham (2nd woman overall), Viv Toms. [See report, Page 1.]

Sun. 4 April – TAUNTON MARATHON: 57 D Kay (1st M60) 3:38:15; **TAUNTON HALF-MARATHON:** 99 Stuart MacGregor 1:29:54, 241 L Jones 1:37:13, 364 Sue MacGregor 1:43:10, 482 M Clarke 1:49:22, 586 J Field 1:54:03. **BOURNEMOUTH HALF-MARATHON:** 659 M Brain 2:23:45. **WHITE HORSE HALF-MARATHON:** 189 T Vivian 1:45:28. **CHEDWORTH 10M MT:** 18 D Barber 1:10:45, 247 D Ellis 1:38:32. **TROWBRIDGE 10K:** 4 K Sparey (1st M40) 37:15, 5 A Bartlett 37:38, 12 B Flook 41:20, 21 S Noyes 43:55, 23 C Atkinson 44:21, 27 D Jarvis 45:09, 31 G Thwaites 46:34, 37 L Irwin 49:15, 39 R Sales 49:29, 49 J Betteridge 51:02, 53 A Hickson 51:57, 83 T Bartlett 1:16:23. **TOTTON 10K:** 184 Les Unsworth 43:17, Linda Unsworth (84th woman) 51:12. **CAMBRIDGE DUATHLON** (National Championships): R Barber (2nd W55) – 7K run 30:06 + 35K bike 1:23:07 + 7K run 33:14 = 2:26:27.

Wed. 7 April – LILleshall 10.2K: 45 D Wrintmore 40:02.

Sat. 10 April – BOSCOMBE QUARTER-MARATHON (6.55M): M Brain 54:01.

Sun. 11 April – THAMES TURBO TRIATHLON: 133 D Jarvis – 400m swim 10:18 + 25K bike 44:56 + 5K run 22:16 = 1:17:30.

Mon. 12 April – YEOVIL 10K: 17 K Sparey 36:04, 55 R Ellis 39:36, 65 S Bryant 40:18, 68 M Bryant 40:33, 85 Stuart MacGregor 41:40, 123 P Hunt 44:36, 132 R Barber (2nd W45) 45:18, 168 A Hickson 48:25, 191 D Ellis 49:59, 270 J Farr 58:25, 193 G Sharam 1:03:28, 297 I S Farr 1:07:03.

Sun. 18 April – LONDON MARATHON: 3111 L Ringham 3:20:30, 4391 D Kay 3:29:03, 5089 C Atkinson 3:33:07, 5703 Sue MacGregor 3:36:47, 5981 T Vivian 3:38:20, 7550 N Evans 3:46:18, 11290 S Stephens 4:00:18, 11291 J Anderson 4:00:18, 23559 D Mellor 4:53:39.

Sun. 25 April – SHAKESPEARE MARATHON: 156 D Kay 3:55:43. **BRACKNELL HALF-MARATHON:** D Jarvis 1:40:02. **CORSHAM 10K:** 5 A Bartlett 36:34, 7 K Sparey (2nd M40) 36:47, 33 R Ellis 40:04, 75 L Jones 43:42, 102 P Hunt 45:52, – R Sales 47:52, 18 A Hickson 49:46, 175 J Betteridge 50:07, 199 J Scott 51:59, 22 V Toms 52:52, 227 J Field 53:54, 289 J Farr 1:01:07, 292 G Sharam 1:01:15, 311 I S Farr (3rd dog) 1:07:22, 326 T Bartlett 1:14:01. **PENSFORD 10K:** 9 D Barber 40:04, 39 N Whitehead 45:10. **HIGHWORTH 5K:** 102 R Barber (3rd W45) 36:19.

Sun. 2 May – NEOLITHIC MARATHON (Avebury–Stonehenge): 12 D Spicer 3:20:50, 75 D Kay 3:55:33, 211 V Toms 5:02:10; **Half-Marathon:** 6 D Wrintmore 1:25:37, 35 Stuart MacGregor 1:39:49, 48 M Pace 1:44:22, 58 Sue MacGregor 1:47:27, 96 G Thwaites 1:55:42, 102 M Pratt 1:57:35. **GLASTONBURY 5.69M:** 74 R Barber (3rd woman) 41:35, 226 J Farr 54:07, 245 G Sharam 55:24, 250 I S Farr (2nd dog) 55:56.

Mon. 3 May – SPRINGFIELD TRIATHLON (400m swim + 30K bike + 5K run): 62 T Frost 6:30 + 47:02 + 21:54 = 1:15:2, 93 K Brown 7:31 + 49:32 + 22:47 = 1:19:50, 94 Stuart MacGregor 7:52 + 47:47 + 24:15 = 1:19:54, 108 J Betteridge 7:12 + 48:06 + 25:54 = 1:21:14, 181 L Irwin 9:16 + 53:46 + 28:12 = 1:31:14, 182 G Phillips (3rd M55) 9:50 + 53:25 + 28:11 = 1:31:26. **BRADFORD 3M:** 3 K Sparey 15:59, 4 A Bartlett 16:09, 9 N Whitehead 19:10, 18 R Sales 20:50, 20 T Simpson 21:09, 24 B Hetherington 21:24, 41 D Mellor 25:53, 49 I S Farr 30:33, 55 T Bartlett 34:35.

Wed. 5 May – CASTLE COMBE DUATHLON: 98 R Barber (1st W50) 2M run 13:48 + 10M bike 30:01 + 2M run 14:24 = 58:43.

Sat. 8 May – LYNEHAM 10K: 62 P Hunt 44:46, 72 Les Unsworth 45:21, 76 J Betteridge 45:52, 77 A Hickson 46:01, 82 L Irwin 46:51.

Sun. 9 May – TEWKESBURY HALF-MARATHON: 115 L Ringham 1:35:34, 189 T Vivian 1:41:26, 289 J Scott 1:49:33. **KEYNSHAM 10K:** 87 D Jarvis 43:24, 323 D Mellor 56:28, 363 J Farr (1st W60) 59:40, 387 I S Farr 1:03:03. **COWPAT CANTER 10K:** 6 D Barber (1st M40) 44:12, 83 L Irwin 57:53, 95 J Anderson 1:00:46, 96 S Stephens 1:00:47; **4K Fun Run:** 4 (1st female) Mitzi Barber.

Tue. 11 May – CALNE 3 x 3.4M RELAY: D Jarvis 22:50, A Hickson 24:23.

Sat. 15 May – BRATTON HILLY 11.65K: 5 D Barber 46:03, 11 R Ellis 48:42, 28 S Reeves 52:38, 30 C Switzer 53:10, 72 S Stephens* 59:20, 73 J Anderson 59:22, 88 J Scott* 1:02:23, 91 D Wrintmore 1:02:47, 104 M Pratt 1:05:34, 113 J Field* 1:08:48, 119 D Ellis* 1:09:48, 122 D Mellor 1:11:41, 128 J Farr 1:14:34, 137 I S Farr (3rd dog) 1:21:03, 139 T Bartlett 1:31:10. *1st women's team.

Sun. 16 May – SWINDON DUATHLON: 123 N Whitehead – 10K run 40:15 + 38K bike 1:23:12 + 5K run 22:20 = 2:25:47; **Novice Category:** 7 A Bartlett – 6K run 21:06 + 19K bike 46:37 + 2.5K run 10:04 = 1:17:47.

Thu. 20 May – SPRINGFIELD 5K: 19 T Frost 18:24.

Tue. 25 May – LACOCK RELAY: A Hickson 18:19.

Sat. 29 May – BATH HILLY 10M: 82 P Hunt 1:21:59, 98 L Irwin 1:28:19, 100 D Ellis 1:28:59, 116 D Mellor 1:40:24, 119 I S Farr 1:56:00, 120 T Bartlett 2:14:48.

Mon. 31 May – WORLD DUATHLON CHAMPIONSHIPS, Belgium: R Barber (6th W55) – 10K run 46:18 + 40K bike 1:22:47 + 5K run 21:59 = 2:32:48.

(continued on Page 4)

FIXTURES: July-October

JULY

Sun 18 Tarrant Monkton 10M & 5M, 10.30; Thrupton 10K, 11.00.
 Thu 22 Springfield 5K, 7.00.
 Sun 25 Gloucester Half-Marathon, 10.30.
 Thu 29 Tom Roberts Handicap, Bradford-on-Avon, 7.40.
 Sat 31 Swanage 12M, 11.00.

AUGUST

Sun 1 Sturminster Newton Half-Marathon, 10.30.
 Wed 4 Pewsey 5M, 7.30.
 Tue 10 Calne 3 x 3.4M Relay.
 Wed 11 Yeovil 5K, 7.15.
 Thu 12 AVR Paarlauf (two-up fixed-time relay), Bradford-on-Avon, 7.45.
 Sun 15 Standish Woodland Chase 10M MT, 11.00.
 Thu 19 Springfield 5K, 7.00.
 Sun 29 Pewsey Half-Marathon, 10.30; Langport 10K, 11.00.
 Mon 30 Southwick Show 3M, 3.00.

SEPTEMBER

Sun 5 Corfe Castle Beast 13M MT, 10.30; Wansdyke Triathlon.
 Wed 8 Yeovil 5K, 7.15.
 Sun 12 Great South Run 10M; Bristol Half-Marathon, 9.30; Warminster 10M, 10.30.
 Thu 16 Corsham 5K, 7.00.
 Sun 19 New Forest Marathon & Half-Marathon, 11.00; King Alfred Torment 8M MT, 11.00.
 Sun 26 Great North Run Half-Marathon; Oldbury 10M, 10.30; Taunton 10K, 11.00.

OCTOBER

Sun 3 Shepton Mallet 10K, 10.30.
 Sun ?? Wessex Cross-Country League (date & venue t.b.a.).

RESULTS (continued from Page 3)

Sat. 5 June - DARTMOOR DISCOVERY 32.2M MT: 6 D Spicer 4:34:59, 45 P Mitchell 5:34:13, 57= T Vivian* & Sue MacGregor* 5:30:31, 62 Stuart MacGregor 5:52:43, 83 V Toms* 6:33:40. *1st women's team (men 6th).

Sun. 6 June - LAKE VYRNWY MARATHON (N. Wales): 65 D Kay 3:37:23. **NORTON RADSTOCK HALF-MARATHON:** 3 K Sparey (1st vet.) 1:20:42, 18 S Noyes 1:34:08, 36 L Jones 1:39:48, 40 M Maidment 1:41:24, 144 T Maidment 2:10:09, 156 D Mellor 2:10:12, 173 S Phillips 2:15:22, 192 I S Farr 2:26:24. **CREWKERNE 9M:** 106 A Hickson 1:19:58. **FAIRFORD 10K:** 17 D Barber 38:12, 98 D Jarvis 44:54, 109 J Anderson 45:21, 281 J Field 57:50, 313 J Ziegert 59:41, 314 N Yates 59:43, 319 T Griffith 59:51; **Fun Run:** 23 M Barber. **POOLE 10K:** 449 M Brain 52:39. **WHITE HORSE TRIATHLON, Calne (400m swim + 20K bike + 5K run):** 32 K Brown 7:18 + 46:02 + 19:13 = 1:12:33, 38 J Betteridge 7:33 + 44:12 + 21:44 = 1:13:29, 55 L Irwin 8:58 + 48:48 + 24:06 = 1:21:52.

Tue. 8 June - CALNE 3 x 3.4M RELAY: A Hickson 24:53.

Wed. 9 June - YEOVIL 5K: 37 S Bryant 19:10, 44 N Whitehead 19:58.

Thu. 10 June - THAMES TURBO TRIATHLON: D Jarvis - 438m swim 12:07 + 21K bike 39:28 + 5K run 24:08 = 1:15:47.

Sat. 12 June - BROAD TOWN 5M: 51 P Mitchell 38:07, 66 S Phillips 40:39, 95 I S Farr (1st dog) 47:11.

Sun. 13 June - SALISBURY 10M: 3 K Sparey 1:00:01, 4 A Bartlett 1:00:16, 10 D Barber 1:02:39, 43 L Harding 1:14:30, 119 T Griffith 1:33:39, 134 D Mellor 1:36:40, 140 S Phillips 1:39:56.

Sun. 20 June - WINCANTON 10K: 1 K Sparey 35:59, 4 D Barber 37:03, 16 D Jarvis 43:05, 21 A Hickson 44:41.

Thu. 24 June - NAILSEA 10K: 1 K Sparey 35:33, 14 B Flock 38:50.

Sun. 27 June - TORBAY HALF-MARATHON: 43 P Mumford 1:29:53. **PUDDLETOWN 20K:** 22 R Bown* (1st woman) 1:31:30, 29 L Jones 1:34:48, 42 L Ringham* 1:39:35, 43 Les Unsworth 1:39:35, 60 T Vivian* 1:46:09. *1st women's team. **COMBE GROVE TRIATHLON, Bath (400m swim + 17M bike + 4½M run):** 13 R Barber (3rd woman) 9:40 + 57:20 + 26:33 = 1:31:59, 19 L Irwin 7:35 + 59:05 + 29:50 = 1:37:40.

Tue. 29 June - LACOCK RELAY: A Hickson 17:44.