



Valley News

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS (81) April 2006

Anthony's Antipodean Adventures

or The Hicksons' (Delayed) Honeymoon

I have two hobbies. One is genealogy, so I was delighted to be invited to a family gathering in Melbourne where we were royally entertained - being transported to dinner in a Bentley, no less. The other is running. Having just completed the Great North Run and dissatisfied with my time, I discovered that there was a half-marathon that week in Melbourne, where on a relatively cool day I was pleased to achieve a personal best time for the year. [Sun. 9 Oct.: 900th (1st M70) in 11:44:58.]

However, with a painful knee and blisters I couldn't do any more training for a while. That didn't stop Denise saying "Depeche-toi!" (Hurry up!), and my replying "We're on holiday" - which became our favourite expression for the next five and a half months. Blisters or not, we continued to walk, around cities and into museums. Oh, how I don't like museums!

In Melbourne it's possible to have all four seasons in one day, but it was undoubtedly better than the other side of the world. On to Adelaide and Coober Pedy, where I was tempted to do some opal mining. There are 3,000 people living there, but no houses and no one to be seen. They live in underground dwellings and work/dig in caves, looking for opals - a very addictive activity, with the sand so easy to dig. Even our hotel was underground.

Next we travelled to New Zealand (via Brisbane, where it rained!), hired a campervan and toured the south-east coast of South Island - a great place: lovely weather, neither too hot nor too cold, still spring in November. We went for a "walk in the bush", five days in Fjordland. The waterfalls were magnificent, including the highest I've ever seen. Unfortunately in crossing the stream behind the falls I slipped and fell in, and my camera went subaqua. Denise's camera also "drowned" in the heavy rain, and took three days to recover. I walked fast, or ran, most of the way at the front of the group while Denise studied the birds and flora with the rest of the group of 42; she took a special liking to the sandflies which wouldn't stop biting her [mutual admiration?].

We travelled by train and coach (there are few trains in NZ), but crossed to North Island in a ferry, the former *Pride of Cherbourg* now renamed *The Enterprise*. In the Bay of Plenty we stayed at a hotel next to a bubbling sulphurous mud pool (what a sight and what a smell!) and were shown around a fabulous kiwi-fruit orchard owned by a Hickson. In the Bay of Islands we visited the Hole in the Rock (and I decided that I am not a very good sailor). And I nearly forgot: Denise jumped from an aeroplane and lived!

Christmas week was spent on Norfolk Island - volcanic, with lots of hills - where I decided to resume my training, but I didn't bargain for those hills. However, it was a wonderful way to explore the island, which is only 7km by 5km with a population of 1,800. By New Year's Eve we had arrived in Sydney, where we spent nine hours locked in a parkland limited to 25,000 people: we had to get there early for the magnificent fireworks display.

On the next day the temperature rose to 45°C, like standing in front of a bonfire. I continued training three times a week, running round the park and the famous Opera House. However, my heel started to hurt; I thought I'd bruised it, and carried on running. Big mistake! I'd pulled a muscle, and only made it worse, so was reduced to limping for the next couple of months. That didn't stop our sightseeing - "Depeche-toi!"

We took the Indian Pacific train from Sydney to Perth, a fabulous three-day journey with stops and even coach trips en route. We were able to explore a village called Cook (pop. 4) in the Nullabor Desert, which used to have a school (still standing), a swimming-pool (filled in) and a prison. In Perth we took up cycling. Denise hadn't cycled for thirty years, but we had fun. The last fortnight in Australia was spent on a coach travelling all over Western Australia, with journeys of 500 km most days, and even visited a bordello in Kalgoorlie (both of us!) with many of our group.

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SECRETARY'S NOTES

Tim Northwood, myself and wife Judy have been given long-service awards from the South of England Athletic Association for serving as committee members of Avon Valley Runners for the last twenty years.

The highlight of the last quarter has got to be the Bath Half-Marathon, in which thirty-six members took part although one was pushed around in an NHS wheelchair [see Results, Page 4.].

Best wishes to our fourteen-plus runners competing in the London Marathon on 23 April. - *Stan Farr*.

Welcome to the Valley!

Each quarter sees a fresh intake of members to enjoy the pleasures of running, whether it be for informal club-runs or in the wider context of competition. The past three months' new names are: Stephen Carver on 19 January, Michael Coles on 31 January, Anna Shorten on 9 February and Nick Johnson on 28 February. We wish you all happy times in Avon Valley.

MILESTONES

Five members are due to graduate to their next age-groups in the quarter just begun. On 5 April Linda Unsworth will reach her half-century; Debbie Roberts will turn 40 on 16 April; difficult to believe, but Vivien Toms will be 60 on 3 May; on 18 May Sonya Stephens will turn 45; and Susan Cook will celebrate her 50th on 17 June. Birthday greetings to all- think of it as a new era of opportunity!

OFFICERS & AWARD-WINNERS

OFFICERS: At the annual general meeting in Culver Close clubhouse on 19 January, the following officers were elected: President Mike Holland, vice-president Dick Barrow, chairman Ted Rockcliffe, secretary Stan Farr, assistant secretary Judy Farr, treasurer Joyce Field, men's captain Darren Wrintmore, vice-captain Stuart MacGregor, women's captain Tina Vivian, vice-captain Denise Ellis, press officer Darren Wrintmore, newsletter editor Tim Northwood, committee members Chris Atkinson, Steve Carver, Pete Chapple, Julia Drewitt, Jan Hunt.

AWARD-WINNERS: At a well-attended twentieth club prizegiving party in the Swan Hotel, Bradford-on-Avon, on 4 February, the following awards not decided simply by performances (i.e. in addition to those listed in Valley News January) were presented: Most improved male Chris Atkinson, most improved female Jo Mumford, most outstanding over-50 Anthony Hickson, The Bomb (for organizing the Conkwell Killer) Paul Clark, injury of the year Pete Hunt, Nan Simpson Trophy (outstanding over-60 woman) Joyce Field. Congratulations to all!

Keeping Up Appearances

Tony Bartlett

1. A running club's members can always be assessed
On general appearance, the way they are dressed;
"Clothes maketh the man", as the old saying goes,
And we are nattily attired from head to toe.
2. Therefore let us examine the things that we wear,
Beginning with hats, although some heads are bare.
Caps designed for baseball are worn peak at back,
Disguising the scalp and the hair that we lack.
3. Some are knitted by Granny with bobble and tassle:
This creation is worn to avoid any hassle;
Next comes the vest with its colours supreme,
Worn proudly by all: we're a formidable team.
4. Cladding our legs are our shorts, waist size just right,
Their smoothly machined contours a veritable delight;
But some are made longer and reach to the knees,
Protecting our thighs from the chill evening breeze.
5. Kit comes in all colours and patterns obscure,
With shades and designs never witnessed before;
There are circles and dots, stripes and zig-zags,
And some boldly displaying national flags.
6. Now our colourful entourage always brings out a quip
From some sniggering teenager who's all mouth and lip;
But their repetitive phrases we've learnt to ignore,
Knowing full well we'll hear them many times more.
7. On a weekday evening, a group out running fast,
Along the way a casual bystander they passed.
"Look at those fat legs - they could do with slimrnin' !"
His remarks were unkind, as the group were all women!
8. When the weather's atrocious on those cold winter nights
We wear hats, gloves and scarves and red flashing lights;
We have bibs that are reflective and shine in the dark"
Like the Blackpool illuminations", says one bright spark.
9. A splendiferous extravaganza, a sartorial cavalcade,
Outclassing the world's best on the catwalk parade;
So there we are, folks - in both chapter and verse
But let's be realistic, we could have looked worse.
10. Therefore reflect on those statements as out training you go,
Delighting the populace with a free kaleidoscope show;
But beneath all the catcalls and many a coarse jest,
In our AVR colours we know we're the best!

RESULTS: January-March

OMITTED FROM LAST ISSUE: **Sun. 13 November - WESSEX CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUE**, Salisbury: senior women - 67 A Burkitt 22:21; senior men 8-3K - 117 T Northwood 45:20. **Sat. 31 December - HUNCOTE HASH 6M MT**: 73 I White 54:28, B White 1:09:31.

Sun. 1 January - HANGOVER 10K, Kewstoke: 33 Stuart MacGregor 41:24, 34 R Bown (3rd woman) 41:25,47 G Roberts 43:07,64 Sue MacGregor (2nd W40) 45:10, 97 S Phillips (1st W50) 50:44, 110 G Phillips 54:43, 128 T Robinson 59:05.

Sun. 8 January - WALT DISNEY MARATHON, Florida Keys, U.S.A.: 291 D Wrintmore 3:25:08. **GLOUCESTER 10M**: 45 L Jones 1:06:44,47 M Maidment 1:06:52, 75 G Roberts 1:10:33. **BURRINGTON COOMBE 10K MT**: 30 I White 48:52, 46 R Barber 55:22,53 B White 1:00:46. **SOMERLY 10K**, Ringwood: 3 A Bartlett 35:22. **WESSEX CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUE**, Pewsey/Upavon: senior men - 43 Stuart MacGregor (2nd M50) 36:36,81 T Robinson 51:30.

Sun. 15 January - ROUGH 'N' TUMBLE 10.4M MT, Milton Lilbourne: 5 D Spicer (3rd M40) 1:12:26,29 P Mumford 1:17:50, 47 D Barber 1:21:47,61 Stuart MacGregor 1:23:15,74 M Pace 1:24:32, 89 I White 1:27:03, 182 K Kinsey 1:36:27, 223 T Vivian 1:41:06,242 L Berrington 1:42:11,252 K Middleton 1:43:01,281 B White 1:47:02, 295 Sue MacGregor 1:49:15, 314 D Ellis 1:52:52, 317 J Scott 1:53:45,324 B Skivington 1:54:32, 333 M Edwards 1:55:44. **RIVERBANK ROLLICK 8.3M MT**, Thornbury: 147 T Griffith 1:36:20.

Sun. 22 January - SLAUGHTERFORD 9M MT: 9 D Spicer (3rd M40) 58:14, 12 A Bartlett 59:39, 46 D Barber 1 :06:36, 59 M Maidment 1:08:37, 100 L Jones 1:13:37, 105 C Atkinson 1:13:59, 106 G Roberts 1:14:06, 121 D Casey 1:16:05, 128 L Ringham 1:17:27, 130 L Irwin 1:17:41,222 K Middleton 1:26:35,223 B Yates 1:26:35,253 B Casey 1:30:23, 305 T Robinson 1:39:13,307 J Field 1:39:21, 311 J Drewitt 1:39:29, 321 T Griffith 1:42:08.

Sun. 5 February - WESSEX CROSS-COUNTRY LEAGUE, Poole: senior women - 20 Sue MacGregor 21 :08; senior men - 48 Stuart MacGregor 38:11, 60 M Pace 39:42. **BLACKMORE VALE HALF-MARATHON**: 154 G Thwaites 1:37:58,191 B Skivington 1:41:29. **PONTYPRIDD 10M**: 102 G Roberts 1:09:12. **LONGLEAT 10K**: 78 J Mumford 43:20, 79 P Mumford 43:20, 120 D Earley 45:26,129 A Tate 45:36,211 R Barber (1st W55) 47:59,365 B Casey 51:28,513 S Phillips 54:58, 603 J Field (1st W60) 56:44,683 T Robinson 57:29,840 D Mellor (oldest man) 1 :02:06, 1009 J Farr (oldest woman) 1:11:51.

Sat. 11 February - CARDIFF 10K LOVE RACE: 3 M Bryant 36:21, 10 Stuart MacGregor 38:55, 20 R Bown 40:30, 27 M Pace 41:11,62 Sue MacGregor 44:09.

Sun. 12 February - WOKINGHAM HALF-MARATHON: 67 A Bartlett 1:21:11. **WESTON TOUGH 10M MT**: 54 K Brown 1:07:57,86 Stuart MacGregor 1:09:42,144 M Pace 1:13:27, 387 Sue MacGregor 1:22:03,427 T Vivian (1st W50) 1:23:30, 493 L Berrington 1:25:21, 622 D Ellis 1:30:04.

Sun. 19 February - BRAMLEY 20M: 36 P Mumford 2:05:14, 160 M Maidment 2:25:15,169 R Bown 2:25:38,177 L Jones 2:26:36,213 J Mumford 2:29:05,262 J Rockliffe 2:35:16, 322 B Skivington 2:40:30, 342 G Thwaites 2:42:35, 370 T Rockliffe 2:45:03,385 T Vivian 2:47:07,470 D Ellis 2:55:44; **BRAMLEY 10M**: 15 A Bartlett 59:20,19 D Spicer 59:51, 48 Stuart MacGregor (2nd M50) 1 :05:08,58 P Mitchell1 :05:49, 100 M Pace 1:10:34, 114 L Irwin 1:12:18, 123 S Ringham 1:13:05, 125 Sue MacGregor 1:13:12,138 L Ringham 1:14:33,147 R Barber 1:15:13,172 L Unsworth 1:17:21,177 L Ladner 1:17:28, 263 J Scott 1:24:37,354 J Drewitt 1:30:56,427 S Cook 1:38:20. **SALISBURY 10K**: 20 T Frost 38:59,150 P Hunt 47:28, 292 M Winn 55:08, 320 A Keen 57:57. **SOUTH-WEST VETERANS' CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS**, Bournemouth: men (BK) - 9 K Sparey (2nd M50) 34:43.

Sun. 26 February - PEWSEY TERMINATOR 10M MT: 12 D Spicer 1:22:14, 66 M Maidment 1:30:03, 90 K Brown 1:32:29, 126 Stuart MacGregor 1:35:12,142 M Pace 1:36:06, 182 I White 1:38:47, 214 S Ringham 1:41:34,227 G Thwaites 1:42:17, 299 D Earley 1 :46:12, 437 Sue MacGregor 1 :55:02, 576 B White 2:05:04. **BABCARY 7½M**: 18 D Wrintmore 47:55. **BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER 10K**: 48 A Bartlett 35:35.

Sun. 5 March - GLOUCESTER 20M: 14 P Mumford 2:04:22, 122 L Jones 2:26:02, 123 M Maidment 2:26:02, 192 J Mumford 2:33:06, 270 V McHale 2:42:26, 293 T Vivian (1st W50) 2:45:41, 297 Sue MacGregor 2:45:50, 299 Stuart MacGregor 2:45:50, 301 G Thwaites 2:46:15, 330 L Irwin 2:49:53, 310 D Ellis 2:58:56. **BUTLEIGH 7M MT**: 20 D Wrintmore 49:58. **NATIONAL MASTERS' CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS**, Bournemouth: 16 K Sparey 28:43.

Sun. 12 March - GRIZZLY 20M MT, Seaton: 803 B Skivington 3:37:02. **HASTINGS HALF-MARATHON**: 524 G Roberts 1:36:53,2482 D Roberts 2:10:36. **CALNE BOWOOD 10K**: R Barber 46:03, M Winn 54:42, G Sharam 56:10, A Shorten 56:31, A Keen 58:00, T Griffith 59:17.

Sun. 19 March - BATH HALF-MARATHON: 93 P Mumford 1:19:59, 119 A Bartlett 1:21:11, 271 T Frost 1:26:56,400 R Bown 1:30:02, 451 L Jones 1:30:53. 545 C Atkinson 1:32:44, 573 M Pace 1:33:05, 616 J Rockliffe 1:33:49, 622 D Earley 1:34:00, 680 G Roberts 1:34:59, 869 J Lowther 1:37:23, 965 T Rockliffe 1:38:44, 1011 T Simpson 1 :39:39, 1069 Sue MacGregor 1:40:02,1125 G Thwaites 1:41:01*,1159 R Hudson 1:41:01*, 1300 R Barber 1:42:50,1333 L Ladner 1:42:58, 1434 A Atkinson 1:44:19,1459 K Middleton 1:44:22, 1575 T Vivian 1:45:20, 1878 L Brown 1:48:08,2522 M Edwards 1:54:33,3706 R Sales 2:02:29, 4179 S Phillips 2:06:23, 4199 G Sharam 2:06:40,4200 D Mellor 2:06:38, 4455 M Winn 2:10:04,4481 A Keen 2:09:48,4521 S Cook 2:10:19,4525 J Adams 2:12:56, 4736 D Kay (wheelchair) 2:11:09,4737 Stuart MacGregor (pushing!) 2:11:10, 4822 A Shorten 2:13:57, 5139 N Coward 2:19:41. [*Stan tells me that the coincidence of the some time recorded by two runners 34 places apart is caused by different start positions.* - Ed.] **HOGWEED HILLY HALF-MARATHON**: 153 J Drewitt 2:06:10. **FLEET HALF-MARATHON**: 1283 D Ellis 1:51:42, 1320 L Berrington 1:52:22. **EASTLEIGH 10K**: 619 M Brain 56:06.

Sun. 26 March - CRANLEIGH 21M: 65 C Atkinson 2:39:24,215 A Atkinson 3:05:09. **MARSHFIELD MUDDLARK 10K MT**: 15 D Barber 52:16, 19 Stuart MacGregor (1st M50) 54:25,28 I White 56:14, 59 B White 1:09:13, 84 T Griffith 1 :20:53.

For inclusion in Valley News, Wiltshire Times and The Book, send results to Stan Farr, 01225 155605, or avonvalleyrunners@yahoo.co.uk.

FIXTURES: April-July

APRIL

- Sun 9 Trowbridge Lions' 10K; Reading Half-Marathon, 10.00; Pewsey 10K, 10.30; Totton 10K, 2.25.
Sat 15 Bournemouth Pier 10K, 3.00.
Mon 17 Yeovilton 10K, 11.00.
Sun 23 London Marathon; Corsham St George 10K, 11.00; Pensford 10K, 1.00.
Tue 25 Calne Mile Hill Race.
Sun 30 Neolithic Marathon (Avebury-Stonehenge) & Half-Marathon; Highworth 5M; Glastonbury 5-69M, 11.00.

MAY

- Mon 1 Springfield Triathlon, Corsham; Bradford-on-Avon 3M, 2.30.
Wed 3 Castle Combe Duathlon, 7.00.
Sun 7 Tewkesbury Half-Marathon.
Tue 9 Roundway Chase, 10K.
Wed 10 Yeovilton 5K, 7.15.
Sat 13 Bratton 11 K, 11.00.
Sun 14 Keynsham 10K, 11.00; Alton 10M.
Sat 27 Bath Hilly 10M, 11.00.
Sun 28 Wells 10K, 10.30; Long Ashton 10K, 9.30.

JUNE

- Sat 3 Keevil 10K.
Sun 4 Fairford 10K, 11.00; Crewkerne 9M, 10.00; Poole 10K, 2.00.
Wed 7 Castle Combe Duathlon, 7.00.
Sat 10 Broad Town 5M, 2.30; Man v. Horse, Llanwrtyd Wells, 11.00.
Sun 11 Salisbury 10M, 11.00; Norton Radstock Half-Marathon, 9.30.
Tue 13 Calne 3 x 3-M Relay, 7.30.
Wed 14 Yeovilton 5K, 7.15.
Sat 25 Cotswold Relay.

JULY

- Sun 2 Portland 10M, 11.00; Kennet Kanter 10M & 5K.
Wed 5 Castle Combe Monster.
Sat 8 Golden Cap 8M MT (Dorset), 3.00.
Sun 9 Sherston 10K; New Forest 10K, 11.15.
Tue 11 Calne 3 x 3-M Relay, 7.30.
Wed 11 Chippenham 5K River run, 7.30; Yeovilton 5K, 7.15.

Anthony's Antipodean Adventures

(continued from Page 1)

On to China. We arrived in Shanghai without visas, so were allowed to stay in the city only that night before flying to Hong Kong the next day just to get them. It was 31°C in Perth, 3°C in Shanghai and 20°C in Hong Kong, which helped us get over the shock of passing from summer to winter without autumn. China is wonderful, but getting used to the food is difficult. How do you order from a menu in Chinese? And choosing from a buffet is bewildering!

Every marathon runner ought to visit the Great Wall of China, if only to put that imagined barrier that some encounter around 22 miles into perspective. I always imagined that this would be a long stone path with occasional flights of steps. Our guide said: "You have two hours, and I suggest that you do the right section, which will probably take a little less than that", so I decided that if I went faster I could do the left section and the right section in that time. Well, I always was ambitious! Off I set at a steady jog, climbing the steps two at a time. But the flat bits were few and the steps weren't of equal height - some as low as six inches and others as high as eighteen - so I walked a bit. The flat parts weren't level either, and could be very steep. Anyhow I managed to get to the end of the left section, took photographs, turned round and started jogging/jumping back. It was advisable to stay near the handrail, which varied between ankle and hip level.

Back at the starting-point I proceeded along the right section, taking photos as I went. I smiled at Denise on her way back, and continued. Passing through the first tower was difficult, with so many people, and it was even colder due to the wind howling through the lookout holes. I've heard of races on the Great Wall, but never imagined it would be much harder than the Welsh Castles relay. At the second tower I was well ahead on time and would like to have gone on a bit farther, but an official wouldn't let me past him, because that section was dangerous. Instead I was directed down steps to the sales area - books, postcards, souvenirs, including plaques saying "I climbed the Great Wall!" My excursion had taken only 45 minutes and I was the first of our party back on the bus.

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Valley News

Captains' Corner

April 2006



Over the last few months Off-Road has been the name of the game and some good names too: The **Rough & Tumble** where Daryl Spicer and Kathy Kinsey were the first **Avon Valley Runners** home; the **Slaughterford 9** where Daryl Spicer led home the Men's team with Alistair Bartlett and Doug Barber to the third spot; the **Tough Ten** where Kenny Brown was our first man back and Tina Vivian finished as first W50; the **Terminator** where Daryl Spicer and Sue MacGregor were the first back for **AVR**. Also Off-Road but without such a fashionable name, the **British Masters Cross-Country Championships** saw Kevin Sparey finish 16th in the M50 event recording a time of 28:43 over the five mile course in a race won by Nigel Gates in 25:51, who some of you may remember from his City of Bath days in the early eighties.

On the road, preparations for the **London Marathon** dominated many racing schedules for **Avon Valley Runners**. Our coachload of runners to the **Bramley 20** were led home by the Ladies team of Rachel Bown, Jo Mumford and Jackie Rockliffe who claimed the third team spot behind London's Serpentine Runners and Reading Road Runners in a highly competitive race. In the Men's race Paul Mumford led home **AVR** ahead of Mike Maidment and Llewelyn Jones and repeated the achievement two weeks later at the **Gloucester 20** where Llewelyn exacted his revenge over Mike and Tina Vivian came away with the 1st W50 prize.

Those without marathon aspirations also performed well on the roads. Men's champion Alistair Bartlett opened his 2006 campaign with an excellent 3rd place at the **Somerly 10K** recording a time of 35:22. The **Longleat 10K** saw Rosemary Barber and Susie Phillips finish 1st and 3rd in the W55 category, whilst in the W60 category Joyce Field and Judy Farr finished 1st and 3rd respectively. Michael Bryant claimed third spot overall at the **Love Run 10K** in Cardiff. Over thirty **Avon Valley Runners** took part in the **Bath Half Marathon**, which saw Danny Kay not let a small thing like a road accident stop him from competing, with Stuart Macgregor pushing him around the course in a wheelchair.



Our Captains' Choice events for this quarter are the **Bratton Hilly 11K** on Saturday May 13th where our ladies have taken the team prize for the last three years in succession and moving into the summer months, on Saturday July 8th is the **Charmouth Challenge** which offers an eight-mile run over Dorset's Golden Cap. On Saturday June 24th **Avon Valley Runners** have been invited by Bath AC to compete in the 105-mile, ten-stage **Cotswold Way Relay** running from Chipping Campden to Bath Abbey. If you are interested in running or supporting then please let us know. *Tina Vivian & Darren Wrintmore*

The Somerset Race Series

Alistair Bartlett has picked up the fourth place award for the **2005 Somerset Race Series**. There were 14 events in the series including the **Quantock Beast**, **Ash Excellent 8** and the **Exmoor Stagger** of which results from any eight were to count towards the final standings. Alistair managed to compete in eight of the races culminating in a personal best of 1:17:47 at the **Cheddar Half Marathon**.

Only twenty-nine runners managed to complete the series, which was won by Mark Lewis of the Royal Navy. For fourth place Alistair received an engraved tankard, as did the first ten men. While the first five ladies each received engraved goblets. If anyone is interested in competing in the 2006 series, which is already under way, with the **Babcary Road Race** and **Butleigh Multi-terrain Race** already having been run, then details can be found at www.somerset-athletics.co.uk

*For inclusion in Valley News, Wiltshire Times and The Book,
please send Results or Articles to avonvalleyrunners@yahoo.co.uk*

Member Profile – Judy Farr

Date of Birth: 24th January 1942
Height: 5' 2"
Weight: 7st 11lb

Residence: Trowbridge
Occupation: Part-time Printer
Running Shoes: New Balance (size 6)

PBs **10K** 38:58 – Devizes 1985
Half Marathon 1:29:06 – Bath 1985

Ten Miles 66:35 – Churchdown 1978
Marathon 3:23:39 – Milton Keynes 1978

I started in athletics at thirteen years of age at school; at fifteen I decided to try race walking because women were not allowed to run distances in this area. I made good progress at this discipline at the age eighteen I competed in my first **National Championship** at London's White City stadium – *I won!!!*

The following year I finished second to my friend and fellow **Avon Valley Runner** Sheila Jennings. From 1962 I went on to win nine consecutive national titles on the track over one-and-a-half miles and later 5K. I even managed to break the **World 5K Walking Record** in Barcelona with a time of 23:36.

I started running to help stay fit for my main event of race walking and enjoyed the feeling of well being that it gives. In 1981 I retired from race walking owing to a back problem and dedicated my time to running.

My highest point has to be representing England in the first **Women's International Marathon**. I hope to keep running and prove that age is no barrier.



Member Profile – Laurie Irwin

Date of Birth: 14th November 1959
Height: 6' 01"
Weight: 13st 2lb

Residence: Trowbridge
Occupation: Civil Servant
Running Shoes: Asics Kayano

PBs: **10K** 44:32 – Pinewood 2005
Half Marathon 1:36:10 – Bath 2005

Ten Miles 72.18 – Bramley 2006
Marathon 3:42:37 – London 2005



My first go at running was at school, when as the team shot putter I was asked to fill in for the 800m – “*Sit on the lead guy's shoulder, then go for it in the last 200*” I was told. I did that for about 500m, got tired, and then watched as everyone else passed, oh well!

For a couple of years I had the desire to do a half marathon as a motivation to get fit and three years ago I entered Bristol. I started slowly a couple of times a week before coming to the club in April 2003 for the first time and joining Tony Griffith's crew on an 8-mile run through the valley. With a lot of encouragement and help from all at the club I completed that event and got the bug for more. I have also enjoyed taking part in triathlons and to overcome the disappointment of not getting into **London Marathon** this year, I have entered the **UK ½ Ironman** in June.

I enjoy taking part in any event where there are other **Avon Valley Runners**. My goal for the future is to try for a compliment from Stan, you know something like “*you done OK Laurie*”, and this would tell me things were going the right way.

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The Magic Marathon

Back in the year 2000 I ran my last marathon, it was the Flora London Marathon and for the second time in succession I missed out on breaking the three-hour barrier and spent the next few weeks hobbling about. So with the imminent arrival of our first child I agreed with my wife that I would not run another. Time however is a great healer and I have a lousy memory so when I suggested a trip to **Walt Disney World** for my fortieth birthday I added: "Oh and while we are there I can run the marathon, there is even a fun run for the kids". Starting in the **Epcot Center** and taking in all four of the Orlando Disney theme parks, this was the race for me. It is not quite the Mickey Mouse event that it sounds, but one of the largest races in the USA with only the New York & Chicago Marathons attracting more runners.



Training had gone well with 50+ mile weeks the norm. Despite suffering a pulled hamstring with two months to go I had managed to break the twenty-mile distance on at least five occasions and by time I had started to taper I was feeling 'up for it'. I had been training at a pace that would see me get close to three hours but I really wanted a sub-three time, especially as I had decided that this would be my last ever marathon – a decision helped by being rejected by London and not enjoying the long runs (one of the real reasons that I so readily agreed to give up marathons back in 2000). So I decided on the risky strategy of aiming for 2:55 and hoping that my legs would hold.

With the race starting at 6am and the organisers wanting us on the start line by 5am I decided to stick to UK time, so that my body would feel that the race was starting at a more likable 11am. I was the butt of a few jokes as I wandered around Disney World sporting two watches, one on GMT and the other local time and when my family were enjoying their early evening meal, I was tucked up in bed. Still I only had to suffer this for two days.



Over 14,000 runners lined up at the **Epcot Center** in unusually cold conditions for Florida and a barrage of fireworks lit up the early morning sky to start the race as we made our way around Epcot for the first five miles before heading out towards the **Magic Kingdom**. I cut quite a good pace being cheered on by thousands of spectators even at such an unearthly hour, the fact that all race numbers had the runners' names printed on them, meant that the crowd were instantly on first name terms with you. The downside was that it inspired me to go a bit too quickly.



In the **Magic Kingdom** the Disney cast were out in force as we ran through Sleeping Beauty's Castle I couldn't resist doing high fives with Chip 'n' Dale and I even managed to sneak a kiss from Elastigirl of the 'Incredibles'. The race then went through four miles of early morning fog down to the **Animal Kingdom**, which is where I started to suffer and at 16 miles said goodbye to my sub-three-hour marathon aspirations. The organisers must have known, as in addition to the standard fare of water, energy gels and PowerAde at the drink stations they were now offering painkillers!!!

Things then got worse as we then had a long drag out towards the **MGM Studios**, this was eased by placards displaying jokes with the punch lines some 50 yards further on, the problem being though, that I was now so tired that I had forgotten the original joke by the time I had reached the punch line. As I climbed the flyover up-ramp to the 20-mile marker I hit the dreaded "Wall" and I was instantly reduced to a shuffle. I then struggled along the **Disney Boardwalk** back to **Epcot** with my final six miles taking well over an hour to complete, I finished in three hours twenty-five. Although that is my worst marathon time ever I have to say that it was my best marathon ever and will treasure my Mickey's Marathon medal, complete with the famous mouse ears. *Darren Wrintmore*



For inclusion in Valley News, Wiltshire Times and The Book,
please send Results or Articles to avonvalleyrunners@yahoo.co.uk

The way it was



Ron Whittle has passed on the photograph above, showing a very young-looking **Avon Valley Runners** team at the **1986 Burnham-on-Sea Half Marathon**.

The results sheet for **AVR** looked quite impressive on the day...

50th Mike Hehir 1:19:18; 68th Phil Mitchell 1:21:33; 69th Gerry Fice 1:21:45; 76th Maurice Cockell 1:22:01; 64th Martin Connor 1:24:29; 139th Ron Whittle 1:26:02; 163rd Miles Holland 1:27:23; 186th Danny Kay 1:28:12; 195th Peter Bray 1:28:38; 201st Bob Ellis 1:28:55; 226th Ray Withey 1:30:25; 251st Stan Farr 1:31:40; 332nd Judy Farr 1:35:08; 455th Sheila Jennings 1:41:38; 444th John Millichip 1:46:55. Also running that day was Tony Bartlett, finishing 107th for St George's Running Club recording 1:24:09.

This has prompted the question of "when was the last time that **AVR** had more than 10 runners breaking the 90-minute barrier at a half marathon?"

Club Colours

After twenty years of plain yellow cotton running vests **Avon Valley Runners** are changing to a design more fitting of a 21st-century running club.

The new vest is in a golden yellow colour with a single vertical green "go faster stripe" on the sides and uses Ron Hill's "Airfit" mini-mesh in a cool polyester fabric. Comfortable to wear, the mesh promotes a cooling airflow while the polyester draws moisture away from the body and is very quick drying. The new vest also sports the club logo on the front and the club name on the reverse.

Both men's and women's styles will be available. The committee has agreed to subsidise the cost and so the vests are being made available to members at just **£10 each**. If you would like to take advantage of this offer then please see either of the Club Captains' armed with your required vest size and a cheque for a tenner, made payable to "Avon Valley Runners".



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