



# Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS  
#94 – October 2008



## Running by Numbers

The **Salisbury 5-4-3-2-1** trail run is so named because if you choose the "full marathon" option (I use the term reservedly as it actually measures over 27-miles) you will cross **5 rivers** (The Avon, Bourne, Ebble, Nadder & Wyle), climb **4 hills** (Old Sarum, King Manor, Clearbury and Salisbury Race Course), pass through **3 country estates** (Clarendon, Longford and Wilton), traverse the grounds of **2 castles** (Old Sarum and Longford) and run beneath the 404ft spire of **1 cathedral**. As well as the "full marathon" there is a 10K, 20K and 30K - I opted for the 20K.

I entered online and my race pack arrived with plethora of maps and informed me that 20K was really 13.6-miles, oh well I needed to get a long run under my belt. The race pack also provided a web link to a virtual flyby of the course which flew me around a bird's eye view of the course topography in less than three minutes - very interesting indeed, check out: [www.sports-log.com/salisbury5-4-3-2-1](http://www.sports-log.com/salisbury5-4-3-2-1)

Race day came and around 130 of us started the 20K from Salisbury Fire station (along with a similar number of 30K runners, the Marathon runners had departed half an hour previous and the 10K runners were still to start). Within 100yards we crossed our first river - the Avon, and I was leading the field! As we approached the first hill at Old Sarum (about a mile in) I was still leading, along with Mark from the FSSA (I knew his name was Mark because it said so on his running vest), a New Forest Runner, a Dulwich Runner and a couple others in unmarked vests. Coming off the hill fort I had lost a couple of places (but I had been running too quickly anyway) but was now a lot more comfortable and at a pace that I felt I could sustain. I crossed the river Bourne and then passed into the Clarendon estate and up to the top of King Manor hill, enjoying the good trail that is the Clarendon Way and starting to pass the backmarkers in the Marathon. Leaving the Clarendon estate, the trail took us into the village of Alderbury. Then disaster struck - as I misread a sign and went running off towards Downton - after about quarter of a mile of seeing nothing (including other runners) I had to consult my map and being a tad tired I had to concede that I did not know where I was to even make a choice as to which direction I should be going, so I binned the map; about turned and ran back to my last good position, just in time to see a group of runners cross the road in front of me and disappear up an annoyingly well marked path into Longford Park – how did I manage to miss that!



In the grounds of Longford castle I managed to cross the river Avon and also pass Mark from the FSSA! It was also here that the 20K course split off and headed back towards Salisbury. I could see the spire of the **1 cathedral** and the white vest of another runner ahead of me. As we followed the river Avon I could see that I was slowly catching the white vested runner and by the time that we had reached the city he was less than 200m ahead. We headed along New Harnham Road, past the drinks station (I wasn't taking one now, with only a mile to go and I was still catching the guy in front) and along Netherhampton Road towards Wilton. After about half a mile I remember thinking that I shouldn't be this far along the A3094, I then spotted two runners heading towards me (one being the Dulwich Runner who had left me at Old Sarum); they stopped at the white vested runner; all now headed towards me. So I about turned and soon met up with Mark from the FSSA just as he was turning off into the Salisbury Water meadows. I passed him (again); then the other two runners passed me and we all reached the city centre. I managed to navigate my way past the Sunday morning tourists and picked up the Riverside Walkway which I then followed all the way to the finish back at the Fire station. I crossed the line in 1:46:47 in fifth place (1st MV40) having crossed **3 rivers**, climbed **2 hills**, passed **2 country estates**, **2 castles** and **1 cathedral** (lost **2 toenails**, gained **2 big blisters** and awarded **1 medal!**). My Garmin clocked the whole adventure at 14.8 miles - some 20K!!! As the race winner commented to me – “*you need to be able to read a map for this course*” - I couldn't agree more and will try to learn for next year.

**Darren Wrintmore**

Please send Results or Articles to [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk)

## Alphabet Soup

1) **A** is for Avon, the valley we love,  
**B** is for Blue as the skies up above,  
**C** is for confidence which we know we all need,  
 For these things above we beg and we plead.

3) **G** is for Greatness as we strive to lead,  
**H** is for Hope and the Help to succeed,  
**I** is for the Inertia that we most all overcome,  
 Easy for others, more difficult for some.

5) **M** is for Marathon, a race to which we aspire,  
**N** is for Nutrition which we must all acquire  
**O** is for Oxygen as each time we breathe  
 Our hearts beat and pound, our lungs pump and heave.

7) **S** is for Stamina and Strength to achieve  
**T** is for Trophy, a personal honour to receive  
**U** is for United as a superb club we stand  
 Undaunted by no-one the best in the land.

9) **Y** is for Yearlong when week after week  
 Ever higher and brighter we earnestly seek  
**Z** is for Zero when it finally ends  
 To relax and retire in the company of friends.

2) **D** is for the Distance we all hope to go,  
**E** is for Effort that we all wish to show,  
**F** is for Faith in our ability now,  
 No weakness of failing can we allow.

4) **J** is for Joking that we all like to share,  
**K** is for Kindness from friends who willingly care,  
**L** is for Love and also for Leisure,  
 This trio of items can give us real pleasure.

6) **P** is for Performance, Perseverance and Pain  
**Q** is for Questions we ask time and again  
**R** is for Resourcefulness and desire for Respect  
 In lackadaisical thinking there's no time to reflect.

8) **V** is for Victory at the finishing post  
**W** is for Winners their good health that we toast  
**X** is for Xenophobia to which we should never cede  
 But embrace everybody, every colour and creed.

10) So now it's all over, my alphabets through  
 These thoughts and persuasions I deliver to you  
 And on cold winter nights as by the fireside you laze  
 Remember the sublime, glorious halcyon days.

*Tony Bartlett*

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## Member Profile – Mike Pace

<b>Date of Birth:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 1969	<b>Residence:</b>	Bradford-on-Avon
<b>Height:</b>	5' 10"	<b>Occupation:</b>	Software Engineer
<b>Weight:</b>	11st 6lb	<b>Shoes:</b>	Mizuno Inspire or Inov8 Mudclaw 270
<b>PBs:</b>	<b>5K:</b> 18:44 – Yeovilton 2007	<b>10 Miles:</b>	66:11 – Hayling 2004
<b>Half Marathon:</b>	1:30:05 – Bath 2007	<b>Marathon:</b>	3:24:18 – London 2008



I have always done some sort of running be it 1500 meters and cross country whilst at school, to the occasional evening or weekend run cross the fields, just to stop my stomach coming over my belt. My first race was the **Portsmouth Half Marathon** back in 1992, two weeks before my degree finals, in a time around the 1:50 mark. I remember getting to half way and having the dreaded realisation that those training runs weren't quite as long as I had thought. I didn't enter another race for eleven years and that race was "**Over the Hills**". A few months later, I finally joined AVR after some pestering from the Macgregor's.

It has always been the off-road events that I have most enjoyed; particularly if they are wet and muddy (I guess I never really grew up).

The events that come to mind are; the Terminator, Slaughterford, Kamikaze, Hell Runner, Devizes Cross Country and Race the Train which I finally beat this year - 5<sup>th</sup> time lucky!

Over the years, I have noticed a common factor in my races. The tough races are always on the morning after a great night out, but weirdly also some of my best times.

And finally, for those of you who doubt, I do, very occasionally, actually start a race slow.

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## Secretary's Notes

Our summer races all went well despite the inclement weather. The **DB10K** attracted 144 runners to the start line and saw a team victory for Avon Valley Runners; The **Conkwell Killer** had 111 runners tackling the miners track and our ladies brought home the team prize; The **Foxtrot 5** had a record field of 241 runners with Liz Ringham (F35) and Anthony Hickson (M70) claiming age category victories. Our Captains staged the **Bern-Col relay** with Mike Pace, Kay Middleton and Philip Uzzell being first of the seven teams to complete the 3 x 1.35mile race – all competitors were rewarded with a fish ‘n’ chip supper, much better than a medal any day! Equally as successful was the long awaited return of the **Tom Roberts Handicap 5K**, which had thirty of you puffing your way up Jones Hill and then trying to stop your legs carrying you away on the steep descent into Avoncliff. Still that didn't stop Christina Davidson, Debbie Vowel and Kevin Gover claiming the bottles of wine that were up for grabs.

Not so successful was the AVR membership survey which I sent out to our 180 members – I have received a return of just ten, so I am not going to waste any of my time in performing any sort of data analysis and just sit back in the belief that 94.45% of you are all complacently happy with the way that the club is being run and the direction in which it is being taken by the committee. I will however share with you some of the comments fed back with the survey...

*It has been clear to me for a long time that it is nearly always the same people helping in the organisation of our races. It seems that certain others can't be bothered and just always want to race them.*

*The club needs more social get togethers!*

*Most of our races are marshalled by the same people every time. There are some members who run every time.*

*The club needs to do more to look after slow/ladies during the winter in Bradford.*

*The clubhouse at Bradford on Avon does not give a very good impression.*

On a more positive note, I would like to congratulate Chris Atkinson on moving up to the ranks of the MV40 and Frances Hood who moves up to the FV60 category. Congratulations also to Jackie Rockliffe and Chris on the birth of their son Eddie.

**Darren Wrintmore**

## AVR has joined the Facebook Craze!!

In case you can't get enough running and racing news from the AVR website and the AVR forum, you can now interact with other runners at the Avon Valley Runners Facebook Group.

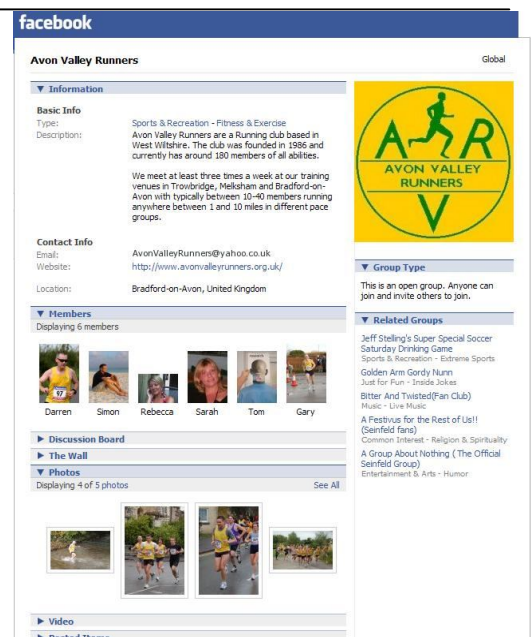
Once you have joined the group you can share photos and videos, interact with other runners using the discussion boards and write on the group wall. Facebook could be a very powerful way to increase the communication within the club and attract new members.

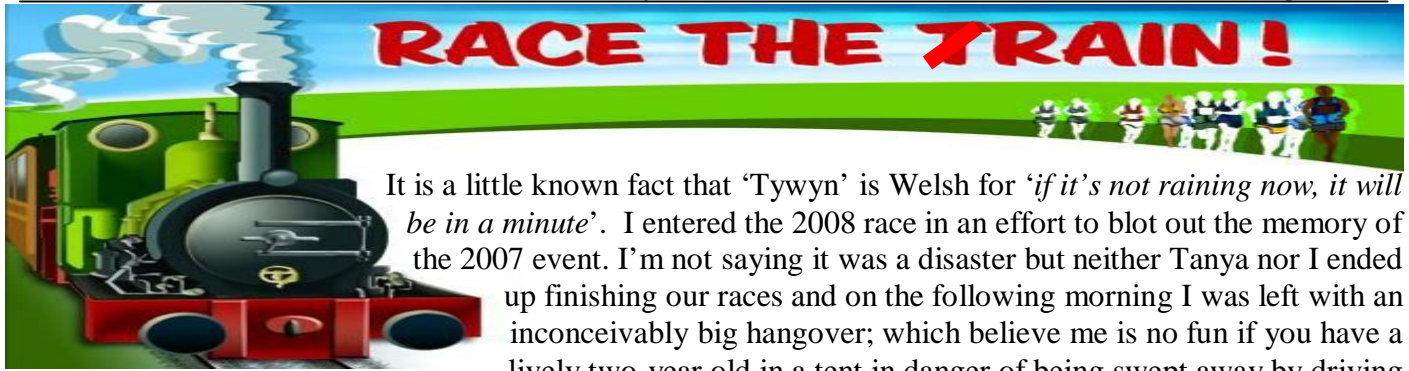
Facebook is also a great way to keep up with friends and family, share you own photos with your friends and reconnect with old classmates and work colleagues.

Click on the link below for more details:

<http://www.new.facebook.com/group.php?gid=21164262450&ref=mf>

**Simon Gilbert**





It is a little known fact that 'Tywyn' is Welsh for 'if it's not raining now, it will be in a minute'. I entered the 2008 race in an effort to blot out the memory of the 2007 event. I'm not saying it was a disaster but neither Tanya nor I ended up finishing our races and on the following morning I was left with an inconceivably big hangover; which believe me is no fun if you have a lively two-year old in a tent in danger of being swept away by driving

wind and rain. It was so wet there was a bloke building a large boat at the other end of the campsite and various animals seemed to be assembling in pairs, waiting for it to be finished.

There are two main races – the 10K morning race and the full 14-odd mile event staged in the afternoon. Both attempt the unlikely challenge of beating the Talyllyn railway, down the valley for the 10km and out and back for the 14 mile afternoon race. In 2007 Tanya entered the morning event and I planned to run the afternoon event but unfortunately Tanya sprained an ankle in the first part of the race and I missed the afternoon race picking her up from the hospital which was 50 yards away from the start but required a large detour to avoid the closed roads. That evening as we huddled under the gazebo watching the rain pour down, I consoled myself that next year it couldn't possibly be as wet as this.

Fast forward to 2008 and the Saturday evening after the race, and we are sitting in the tent listening to the rain lashing down outside; which only goes to show how wrong you can be about predicting the weather in Wales. There were understandably less people from the club this year but Stu & Su Macgregor, Mike Pace and I had all returned, along with Race the Train newcomers George and Debbie Roberts. The weather during the day was pretty good for racing, overcast with a bit of drizzle, and Stuart and Debbie had good runs in the 10km morning race. Stuart who seems to be coming into some form after a long return from injury beat the train by over eight minutes!

The afternoon race had been cut from 14.7 miles to 14 miles because of that pernicious modern development - 'health and safety'. Not that Mike, George, Su and I were complaining. The course starts next to the train station at Tywyn and runs up the valley along the railway before heading up the side of a hill and following a narrow trail which loops back to rejoin the outward route. All the way there and back the cheerful toot of the little train can be heard. It teases you by zooming past, then waiting at a station before chugging off again, thus it is possible to be overtaken several times and still be in with a shout of beating the train. The trick is to get a reasonable start to avoid being stuck behind slower runners on the narrow track, while leaving enough in the tank to push on for the last few miles.

I was fortunate to get this pretty much spot on, and overtook Mikey Pace who I had been trailing for most of the race at around the 11 mile mark. I eventually beat the train by nearly two minutes. I'll just repeat that in case you missed it: **"I beat the train by two minutes!"** I know the course was shorter than last year and lots of other people beat the train too, but for runners like me who are in the 'enthusiastic but unlikely to trouble the podium' category, I'll have it. These minor victories that may be spurned by more talented athletes are as good as it gets and worthy of celebration. It's also an achievement that unlike knocking 50 seconds off my marathon time, even my mum can appreciate. (Well almost; 'that's nice, dear' pretty much covers all running orientated news these days).



Even stranger, as the train came in at 1:47:59, one Michael Pace came in at... 1:47:59 (gun to chip) – which still counts! Mike's philosophy is similar to mine and we were both, well, chuffed.

It was a pity for the organisers that shortly after the race the heavens opened and the rain came down in deluge-like proportions for the third year running – and it didn't really let up for the whole evening. The town really puts a lot of effort into this great event which was celebrating its 25th year in 2008. The medal, t-shirt and goody bag are all well above average and the location, though a long drive along winding B-roads albeit in pretty countryside can make for a lovely weekend – if the weather wasn't quite so unpredictable.

That evening we all crammed into the Macgregor's tent, had a few drinks and listened to the rain, and in true British Dunkirk-spirit we all had a great time. We consoled ourselves with the thought that next year it couldn't possibly be as wet as this... surely!

**Mike Maidment**

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## Wimborne by Bus

Avon Valley Runners are laying on a complimentary bus for the **Wimborne 10** being held on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November. The bus will leave the car park at Clarendon School aka Trowbridge Sports Centre at 08:00 and should get us to Wimborne in plenty of time for a good warm-up. So if you have not already done so, please send your entry form in to the organisers ASAP. Also please let Ted Rockcliffe know if you wish to use the bus, so that we can get the right size vehicle. It is also planned to stop off on the way back at the Wimborne Football club for a drink or two.



## Captains Corner

Well, once again it has been a busy few months at Avon Valley, with members competing at plenty of events. Starting with the **Avon Valley Mile** where 34 club members lined up to push themselves to the limit, with Michael Towler only just missing out on the club record, recording a time of 4:48. A wet Castle Combe **DB10K** hosted 14 club members and our men's team of Alistair Bartlett, Tom Frost, Chris Stevens and Vojtech Hajdu took the club challenge. A brighter day saw the return of the **Conkwell Killer** which was a great success, with the ladies course record being broken by nearly 3 minutes, swiftly followed the next weekend at the **Foxtrot 5** where a new ladies course record was also set.

Another race making its return after a long break was the **Tom Roberts Handicap**. Darren and Chris's scientific approach to the handicap seeding seemed to work as all runners finished within a five minute window. A special well done to Debbie Vowell on coming second, it's really great to see a member of our January beginners group continually improving. Another beginner from January has also been making great strides by succumbing to coercion and entering her first Half - Chippenham. Well done to Tina Towler on a fantastic time of 1:58:47 and finally to Ali Atkinson who achieved her goal of 1:39:06 an amazing time which I know Ali has worked very hard for.

Congratulations to Jackie Rockcliffe on the arrival of Eddy and of course to our Chairman, his namesake.

To round off, please, please lend your services on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November for the "**Over the Hills**", marshals' etc required!

Happy Running - *Julia and Carl*



On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October after training at our Melksham session, we are planning to have a ten-pin bowling session at Christie Miller. Training kicks off at 19:00 so we should be ready to make the first strike around 20:30 – Please let Darren know if you are interested.

## There is more online....

See the online version of this edition of the Valley News at [www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) for additional Race Reports on the **Classic Quarter** by Darren Wrintmore and the **Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon** by Mike Maidment.

*Fixtures*

Sunday, October 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Clarendon Way (Marathon/Half)</b> – Salisbury @10:30 <b>Marshfield Mudlark</b> – Marshfield @10:30
Sunday, October 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Swindon Half**</b> – Swindon @11:00 <b>Box Fun Run</b> – Box @11:00 <b>Mendip Muddle+++</b> - Charterhouse-on-Mendip @11:00
Sunday, October 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Salisbury Half</b> – Salisbury @11:00 <b>Exmoor Stagger+++</b> – Minehead @11:00
Tuesday, October 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Malmesbury 8</b> – Malmesbury @19:00
Sunday, October 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Stroud Half</b> - Stroud @10:00
Saturday, November 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Victoria Park 4</b> – Bath @11:00
Sunday, November 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>“Over the Hills”</b> – Bradford on Avon @10:00 – <b>Help Required</b>
Saturday, November 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Cheddar Half</b> – Cheddar @13:30
Sunday, November 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Wiltshire 10K</b> – Chippenham @11:00
Sunday, November 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Wimborne 10**</b> – Wimborne @10:30 <b>Avebury 8</b> – Avebury @10:30
Sunday, November 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>EAS 10K</b> – Castle Combe @11:00
Sunday, November 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Downton Half</b> – Downton @10:00
Sunday, December 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Swindon Santa Dash 5K</b> – Swindon <b>Full Monty Cute+++</b> – Montacute House, Yeovil @10:30

++ Off-Road qualifying race      \*\* AVR Challenge Series race

*Member Profile – Tina Giles*

<b>Date of Birth:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> May 1964	<b>Residence:</b>	Winsley
<b>Height:</b>	5'2" ish	<b>Occupation:</b>	Reflexologist
<b>Weight:</b>	7st 10lb	<b>Shoes:</b>	Any Nike/ Asics In Sale
<b>PBs:</b>	<b>10K:</b> 43:26- <i>Castle Combe 2008</i>	<b>10 Miles:</b>	66 mins- <i>Weston-Super-Mare 1986</i>
	<b>Half Marathon:</b> 1:27:48 <i>Bath 1984</i>		



Running on and off has been a big part of my life and the people I have met have been wonderful. As a child I ran everywhere, being able to run helped me fit into the six junior schools and three senior schools I went to. At age 15 at another new school I was sat next to Helen Blake, a member of Bath and Percy AC, and I went along. It was a great club for youngsters; we did the **Gwent X-Country League**, track and field. We'd go down to the club house, train round the streets of Bath, buy tuck, then watch Top Of The Pops back at Bath and Percy boys club in New King Street. Adrian Boswell (girls coach) did a great job and pushed us on to reach county standard in X-country and track and field.

At 17 I moved to Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex and joined Southend AC. I used to run 2-miles along the sea front to the club track, train, then run 2 miles back along the sea front (believe me the strongest winds are in Southend-on-Sea, there's no way I could do that now). Here the girls had a wonderful coach "George" (he was 70+ then, a real star). George said I was a sprinter and I spent the next year chasing Tessa Pike around the 400m and 800m- never catching her. At 19, and back at Bath AC I used to train with teammate Karen McLeod (she ran the marathon in the Atlanta Olympics) again never catching her! I stayed running with Bath AC until my early 20s and then my running tapered off.

I met my husband Simon in the TA, our first date was a run! From then on I was less competitive but ran to keep fit. After having our children Emily and Rachael, I started to run a couple of times a week to get fit with other mums- Linda Ladner, Kath Reckless and Dinah Hancock. We entered the **Marshfield Mudlark** in 2004 calling ourselves "The Winsley Whippets" in our Lidl running outfits (amazingly we finished 2nd team). It was here that Stan Farr gave me an AVR card and I joined AVR.

I love running in the Avon Valley, I run twice a week (sometimes 3) and have tried hard to do more races for AVR this year and make a real effort to make the Thursday club training night. I especially enjoy flying down through the woods of the 'Over the Hills Course'. Thanks go to everyone at AVR club for their friendliness and encouragement.

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## SLMM Pickings

The **Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon** or SLMM as it is known was at Helvellyn this year – or so they tell me. The mountain that I saw on the first morning may indeed have been Helvellyn but as it disappeared into the mist shortly afterwards and refused to come out for the remainder of the two-day event, I'll just have to trust the map and take the word of some of the competitors who know the area. This was my second SLMM and by far the dampest. Last year we had finished in relatively balmy temperatures running along the glorious High Street near Patterdale with blue skies overhead and the peaks of the Lake District at our feet. This year we could have been anywhere; Norway, Darkest Peru, the Mother in Law's airing cupboard – and would have been if my navigation skills had been called upon - but fortunately I was again running with my partner Allan Cox (Corsham Runners) who has far greater experience of these events than I. The SLMM, like its better known cousin the **OMM**, is a two-day mountain navigation event open to teams of two. Teams navigate between checkpoints in a set order. The first day finishes at a mid-way campsite and competitors must carry lightweight camping and safety equipment. We were entered in the Bowfell Class, the second toughest course with only 45 teams entered. The slightly shorter Kirkfell and Harter Classes are far more popular attracting over 100 teams each. There were some leg achingly big climbs including a 400m ascent from the start just to get the blood going and another 450m climb in mid-afternoon, just when it is likely to do the most damage. No amount of energy gels and chocolate oatmeal bars can improve the temperament when you learn that you have only climbed 200m and aren't even half way. In between there was a pretty tarn and a bit of a track around one of the hills but all that was forgotten on the afternoon ascent.

Allan is one of those people who not only insist that I run as hard as I can but that I smile when I'm doing it. "It doesn't matter where we finish", he lied, "as long as you enjoy it". Now I don't know about you but 'enjoy' is not a word I can use when I'm arse deep in bracken halfway up the side of possibly the wrong hill in the rain and my last Mars bar is but a memory. I don't do these events to enjoy them. I do them as a test and to push myself as hard as I can for the dubious sense of achievement that even my Mum fails to appreciate. The course improved after that second big climb and we managed a tidy pace in the mist-bound hills to finish at a decent run into camp completing Day 1 in just under 6 ½ hours. We had to huddle under a tree for 20 minutes while it lashed it down before we could get the tent up. Fortunately despite bouts of heavy rain there were dry patches and we were able to set up camp, get changed and most importantly, get the kettle on, in between downpours.



The Saunders is a bit different from the OMM in that you can buy soft drinks, milk and even (hallelujah) beer at the overnight camp. It is also significantly smaller than the OMM with around 500 teams this year. A bit later on Jimmy Lowther and Steve Williams made it to camp after a tricky day of navigating in their first taste of this sort of event. Sadly Steve was injured with a dodgy knee and despite a night's rest; they had to withdraw on the second day having done most of the hard work. I would like to say that we were greeted on the morning of the second day by blue skies and morning sunshine, but it would be a lie; it was misty, rainy and all-in-all a bit grim and it stayed like that the whole day. Navigation was tricky as it was a case of taking a bearing and hoping for the best. All these type of events are designed to provide the team with a choice of routes; straight over the top of the hill, up the valley and round the hill, a detour to a track, or commonly a combination of all three, and it is the experienced runners who pick up time by making the right decisions. Part of our course took us up a hill so steep it was completed on all fours and an hour or so later found us on top of Great Dodd at 803m taking a compass bearing to the penultimate checkpoint hidden in a sheepfold. The last ten minutes were a descent of the 400m climb we had completed on the first day down frankly dangerously steep terrain, cut up by the masses of runners that had finished before us. We made it to the finish ten minutes later utterly beat. We managed

a heavy limbed shambling jog-trot to the finish, reminiscent of the closing credits of an episode of Dad's Army, through a smattering of half-hearted, though welcome, applause.

It is not any sense of enjoyment that keeps me running at such moments, though I admit there is a certain amount of pride in forcing tired limbs forward. No, it is that for a few brief moments, regardless of the hardship, despite the grim weather conditions and notwithstanding the also-ran finish position; for that all-too-short period, I feel like a bit of a hero. I can savour the elation of finishing the event having completed 48km distance and over 3km of climb over 11 hours of racing. It only lasts a few brief moments, or if you are lucky until your next run and then the next challenge is being planned and training commences but it is for such moments that I run and will continue to do so. But did I enjoy it? Of course!

**Mike Maidment**

Please send Results or Articles to [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk)



The **Endurancelife Classic Quarter** is an adventure race over forty four miles from the southern-most, to the western-most points in Cornwall, along the legendary South West Coastal Path! That translates to running a quarter of the compass from Lizard Point, to Lands End. Fortunately the run can be undertaken as a four-man relay (or in our case three men and a lady). I had been asked to join a team composed of runners from Cornish clubs: Carn Runners, Cornwall AC and Kernow.

The race briefing took place at ridiculous o'clock outside the Lizard Point Cafe and in pretty reasonable conditions the Classic Quarter got underway. I started off at a brisk pace and took the early lead, only to lose it a couple miles later, whilst gingerly descending into Kynance Cove. Whilst scrambling over the rocks in the cove and back out again I lost a further two positions, however once on better footing I managed to latch onto the two runners in front. A familiar pattern was then established, with my going ahead on the flatter sections (by flatter I mean not so vertical), maintaining a slight lead on the ascents then dropping back on the steep descents. As we approached Mullion Cove I managed to lose the coastal path and ended up in a bog. This and the descent into the cove saw me pass through the checkpoint in third place with fourth hot on my heels but by the top of the climb I had taken second spot back. I was now in familiar territory, this is where I had done a lot of my marathon training in 2005 and made my move at the Marconi Monument where I knew that the descent would be on a good tarmac surface as it dipped in Poldhu Cove, I kept the pace up as best I could as I ascended the other side and could see neither of my rivals keeping with me. Another steep descent took me onto the beach at Church Cove for a run along the sand and into the dunes before climbing again. However one of my rivals had somehow clawed his way back to me, but knowing that the finish was not far I put in a strong change of pace and despite a battle with the 'dibber' (the electronic baton used in the relay and worn around the runners neck) I clocked in for second place overall at the Halzephron Checkpoint recording 1:32:02 for my 11-mile leg and passed the dibber on to my team mate. Next in was Pete Roper (a former runner-up in OTH) who soon clocked back out again to carry on and complete the full 44-miles - solo!

After a couple of lead changes our relay team managed to establish a winning lead and came in to finish in six hours forty six minutes - we actually finished three minutes earlier but the PR company covering the event asked to take a photograph of our final runner 'dibbing in' again and to the horror of the Race Director this action over-wrote our official finishing time - good job that the second place team were still over five minutes away!!!

What about an all AVR team next year?

**Darren Wrintmore**

