



Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS
#95 – December 2008



See inside for details...

Please send Results or Articles to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

Your Club Needs You.....

It's approaching that time of year when you have the opportunity to influence the democratic running of the club, through the election of officers and voting on new club business. The Annual General Meeting of Avon Valley Runners is to be held on the evening of **Thursday 15th January** after training in Bradford on Avon. After twenty two years of service to Avon Valley Runners Ted Rockliffe has decided to step down from the committee, leaving the position of Chairman vacant. Also standing down from the committee is Ladies Captain Julia Drewitt who will also be relinquishing her role as Assistant Secretary, Sue Cook is giving up her role as Ladies Vice-Captain and Chris Atkinson is standing aside as Vice-Chairman. I am therefore looking to receive nominations in writing for the following positions by **Friday 2nd January**:

- **Chairman** - to chair our monthly committee meetings, currently fulfilled by Ted Rockliffe.
- **Vice-chairman** – to support the Chairman, currently fulfilled by Chris Atkinson.
- **Honorary Secretary** - currently fulfilled by Darren Wrintmore who manages the clubs affairs.
- **Assistant Secretary** – to minute our monthly meetings, currently done by Julia Drewitt.
- **Treasurer** - currently fulfilled by Joyce Field who controls the financial status of the club.
- **Men's' Captain** - Carl Davies currently looks after the racing interests of our male runners.
- **Assistant Men's' Captain** - currently fulfilled by Simon Gilbert.
- **Ladies Captain** – Julia Drewitt currently looks after the racing interests of our lady runners.
- **Assistant Ladies Captain** – to support the Ladies Captain, currently done by Sue Cook.

Any new business for discussion at the AGM must also be received in writing by **Friday 2nd January**. One of the proposals intimated so far, is that for compulsory assistance of members at AVR hosted events. Although I do not support such a draconian approach, I do appreciate the reasoning behind it (*This year's Conkwell Killer was almost a disaster with only a minimum number of members coming forward to marshal and then on the day, some didn't show up!*). Alternatives might be to bar any members competing in our open races or to increase membership fees to a level where we could 'buy-in' support when required. Either way it will no doubt provoke some lively debate at the AGM.

This past few months has seen a lot of work going on behind the scenes and I am pleased to announce that we have secured the services of Alan Hayes for AVR. For those of you who do not know Alan (though you may well have spotted him at races all over the South West) he is the Honorary Secretary of Wiltshire Athletics Association and a UK:A Level-2 coach, specialising in Endurance events. Alan has agreed to lead a group of Avon Valley Runners to help maximise their running potential and hopefully bring more success to the club. Alan lives in Trowbridge and serves as the personal coach of a small number of local athletes. Details of how to join Alan's sessions will be announced soon. In order to compliment Alan, we have our five UK:A Level-1 coaches.

The Bowling night proved a rather successful evening with thirteen members trading their running shoes for bowling shoes after training at Christie Miller. Strikes (and Ducks) were scored (or not) aplenty in the ultra violet lighting of the three lanes that we had booked



I would also like to welcome into the valley the following new members (and some old ones): Brian Vaughan from Trowbridge; Jonathan Brown, Vron Black, Charlotte Maurissen and Graham Forrester from Bradford on Avon; Trevor Janes from Bathampton; Christian Checkley and Jordan Fenlon from Melksham; Glenn & Jacqueline Johnson from Warminster; Eleanor Bettles from Atworth.

Darren Wrintmore



The Stan Farr 5K

In honour of our former Secretary and founder member Ian "Stan" Farr we have decided to rename our Boxing Day 5K to the **Stan Farr 5K**. Stan took part in every one of these events, which he started in 1960 with Trowbridge & District AC through to 2005 – even winning the race in 1968. The run will take place on Boxing Day at 11:30 meeting in Pound Lane, Bradford on Avon, before retiring to a local hostelry for post-run refreshments. This event is once again closed to members of AVR only. It is planned that we will use champion chip timing courtesy of DB Max for the race and would appreciate early indication of your intention to run or help on the day.

Please see Chris Atkinson for more details.

Note that there will be no training at either Melksham or Bradford on Avon on the 24th / 25th / 31st December or the 1st January!!!

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Member Profile – Andrew Hoddinott

Date of Birth:	26th April 1967	Residence:	Melksham
Height:	5' 10"	Occupation:	Software Engineer
Weight:	12st 8lb	Shoes:	Asics Cumulus
PBs:	10K: 45:04 – Pewsey 2008	10 Miles:	78:01 – Weston Super-mare 2008
		Half Marathon:	1:46:23 – Bath 2008



If somebody had told me at school that when I was 40ish, I'd be running for fun

I'd always cycled as a kid and used to go out with Trowbridge cycling club on Sunday mornings. I also played badminton but that was about it for exercise. I really got into fitness at Castle Place Gym in the late 80's and then started Circuit Training. This is where I met my wife Bev; she bullied me into going out running with her and also got me swimming. My first race was one of the local Fun Runs in the early 90's: Frome, Trowbridge, Westbury, Great Hinton etc. there were so many to choose from. After a few, I even began to enjoy them! In '94 I did the **Springfield Triathlon** and discovered just how tough it is to run after a bike.

In 2001 I did my first half marathon: the Norton Radstock and really enjoyed it despite that hill twice! I knew Chris and Ali Atkinson from their circuit training days and kept bumping into them at races. I'd always be greeted with a "you should come along to club one night". I finally joined AVR in 2006 but it took me nearly a year before I turned up to training regularly.

I did my first "**Over the Hills**" in 2005 and loved it - I don't think I'll ever tire of that route. Since I joined AVR I've certainly improved and it's been a great incentive to get out on cold wet nights when the sofa would otherwise have been beckoning. I run most Wednesdays at the Melksham session and also on Thursday's as often as I can. I've been to a few Tuesday sessions and would like to do more but it clashes with circuit training! As well as swimming and biking, I try to squeeze in climbing a couple of times each month too.

This year I took part in four sprint triathlons and for the last few months I've been going to Cotswold Water Park for some early morning open water swimming. I hope to move up to Olympic distance next season and with luck, the New Forest Middle Distance event in September. I recently attended a UK:A Level-1 athletics coaching course, it was informative and good fun despite the pouring rain - indoor javelin and shot putt were very interesting! I'd recommend the course to anybody and I hope I can use it to help out at the club.

Captains Corner

Another few exciting months have slipped by at an incredible pace; this pace has hopefully been matched by you in your races!

What a time was had by our **OMM** competitors, any others of you out there who were contemplating it for next year – be warned.

Over the Hills" on the 2nd November was a huge success once again and incredibly the weather was extremely kind, although the river was too high to cross which was disappointing for the more hardened off roaders!

The **Cheddar Half Marathon** as always fielded a good AVR turnout with Liz Ringham, Rachel Bown and Kath Kinsey scooping the ladies team prize. The **Wimborne 10** again saw the club represented in force with Ali Atkinson recording a PB at this distance of 74:24 and again the ladies scooped a team prize thanks to Liz Ringham, Jo Mumford and Tina Giles.

And so we gently glide towards Christmas, with the **Bromham 10K** to look forward to, this Ladies Team Captain will be attempting the **GRIM** on the same day, a race that I fear will do exactly as it says on the tin. Our club Boxing Day run will be held as usual, but on a different course and under its new name of the **Stan Farr 5K**.

With a distinct lack of Men's Team prizes being collected of late, my advice chaps is to keep off the mince pies and train hard for the New Year ahead!

Happy Running - *Julia and Carl*

Walking on Fire

Back in May I organised the **Shaw&Whitley Stampede** and **Keane Kanter Fun Run** to raise funds for CLIC Sargent, as one of my son's six-year old classmates had been diagnosed with a cancer and CLIC Sargent were providing him and his family with much welcome support. Anyway the money raised from the event is still rolling in and has now reached over £2,600. When CLIC Sargent advised me of this latest status, they added - would I be interested in taking part in their **"Hot&Haunted Firewalk Challenge"** taking place on Halloween at Bath Racecourse. How I could say anything other than "yes". After I had responded, I thought that I had better see what I was letting myself in for. The challenge: to walk barefoot over 20 feet of wood embers burning at 1236 degrees Fahrenheit - hang on doesn't paper combust at 436 degrees and aluminium melt at 1100 degrees! What temperature does flesh burn at, it can't be that high, especially as I seem to blister if I just pick up a cup of tea that is a bit too warm! Before I had a chance to back out, my JustGiving page had clocked up a few hundred pounds in sponsorship from those who wanted to see me go up in flames.



I decided to watch a "Fantastic Four" movie to see if I could pick up any tips from the Human Torch, but got rather distracted by Jessica Alba wearing her figure hugging lycra suit. I did however get sufficiently inspired to wear my own Fantastic Four outfit for the ordeal.

The evening started with a training session ominously named *'Learn or Burn'*, introducing us to the physics and physiology of fire-walking. Apparently coal, although a good combustor is a pretty lousy conductor of heat and something called the Leidenfrost Effect ensures that your feet don't burn (too much) – as long as you cross quickly. That was all well and good until we saw the fire being lit and the flames licking the night sky. It was now that the psychology of fire walking came into play and lots of positive mental attitude exercises had us up and ready to cross the fires with a response to the question: *"Are you ready?"* with a hearty *"Hell Yes!"*. Ten quick steps had me at the other end and ready to do a lap of honour.

So now you may be wondering what this fire walk has to do with running, especially as the event was billed as the **"Worlds Shortest Sponsored Walk"**. Well, when I signed up for the fire walk, I didn't know if I could or would do it. The same is true of approaching your first Marathon, Triathlon or any other event which takes you out of your usual comfort zone. However with the appropriate training and a positive mental attitude the challenge can be conquered.

Now after me, say five times *"I am Strong; I am Powerful; I am Magnificent!"*

Darren Wrintmore

Fixtures

Sunday, December 7th	Bromham 10K** – Bromham @11:00 Swindon Santa Dash 5K – Swindon Full Monty Cute++ – Montacute House, Yeovil @10:30
Sunday, December 14th	Wiltshire XC Championships – Hudsons Field, Salisbury @13:45
Friday, December 26th	The Stan Farr 5K – Bradford on Avon @11:30
Sunday, December 28th	Somerley 10K - Somerley House, Ringwood, Hampshire @11:00
Thursday, January 1st	Hangover 10K – Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare @11:00
Sunday, January 4th	South West XC Championships – Bicton College, Exmouth Gloucester 10 – Quedgeley, Gloucestershire @10:30
Sunday, January 11th	Rough 'n' Tumble – Milton Lilbourne @11:00
Sunday, January 25th	Slaughterford 9++ - Rudloe @9:50
Sunday, February 8th	Longleat 10K – Longleat @10:00
Sunday, February 15th	Bramley 20/10** – Bramley @10:30 Salisbury 10K – Salisbury Football club @10:00
Sunday, February 22nd	The Terminator++ – Pewsey @10:30

++ Off-Road qualifying race

** AVR Race Series event

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CRAM Tags

Question: *How many of us run without any sort of ID?* Even if we run with others, would they know who to contact if there was a problem?

Steve Cram (the Olympic runner) has found a very simple way to carry ID which does not get in the way. 'Steve's brother, Kevin, tragically fell and died whilst out running in 2001. Like most runners he was not carrying any ID. His identification was consequently delayed by several days, adding to the distress of the incident. Dedicated to the memory of Kevin, CRAM tags are small, lightweight identity tags which lace easily and securely into your running shoe'.

Derek Jarvis who used to be a member of Avon Valley suffered a heart attack whilst out running back in July of this year and had no form of identification on him. The tag would not have saved his life but it would have given the hospital and the police a head start in contacting next of kin. For the cost of £1 for the tag, it is a small price to pay, with all monies for the tags going to the COCO charity. COCO is a registered children's charity working on closely monitored education and healthcare initiatives that make a big difference to the lives of children living in poverty throughout the developing world I urge all runners to carry some kind of ID and these tags seem a very simple, cost effective way to do it.

Avon Valley Runners have purchased 50 CRAM tags and are available on a 'first come – first served' basis at just £1 each. Please see any committee member to purchase yours now. **Jane Elliot**



FLM Club Places

Avon Valley Runners have been allocated three club places for the 2009 Flora London Marathon to be run on Sunday 26th April. These places will be drawn by ballot on **Thursday 11th December** before training in Bradford on Avon. Please pass evidence of your rejection onto Ted Rockcliffe prior to the draw, so that your name can go into the hat.



A Bunch of Fives

I once belonged to a running club situated way up North,
Three times in the week's evening training we'd go forth,
A rag-tag bobtailed mob we were a sight to be seen,
Led on most occasions by Margaret Larch – a real drama queen.

One evening around the street where the local hoi-polloi all sat,
She stopped, took a dramatic pose "Look at yourselves, all flab and beer belly fat,
Her histrionic remarks were not approved by those to whom were addressed,
As a man they rose (surprisingly light on their toes) and as one forward they pressed.

Now to beat a retreat back along the street was the logical thing to do,
So we turned on our heels to save our souls (well wouldn't you?)
But much to our dismay more came from the other way bottling us up in between,
Just for a minute close your eyes and picture the scene caused by our queen.

A large shaven head at this juncture in time was thrust into my view
With piggy eyes, broken nose and the obligatory tattoo
"Think I'm fat?" he croaked as around my throat his pudgy fingers he threw,
"Not at all" I replied with my mouth open wide gasping the breath I drew.

Then with sounds of banshees or Hades with whistles and rattles,
Came out ladies to our aid and charged into battle,
With hair-pulling, screaming, and eye-gouging and scratching,
They beat off these yobs with a fury ere matching.

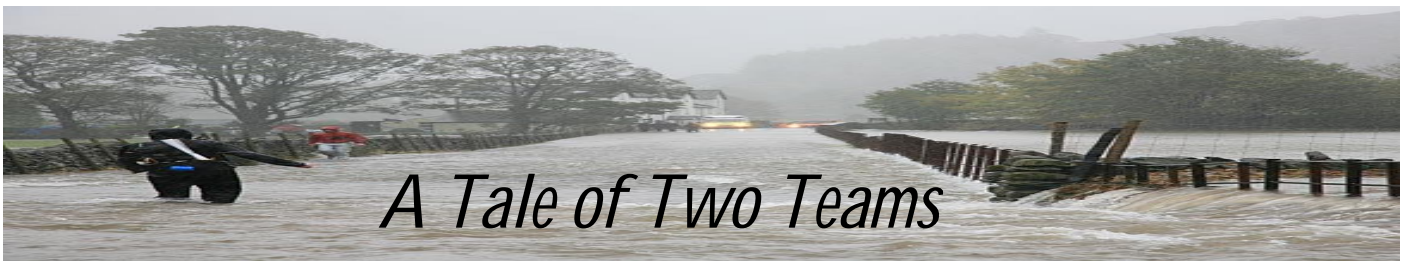
By now all this kerfuffle had disturbed the neighbourhood anew,
And with blue lights flashing and siren howling entered the boys in blue,
The majority of the hooligans had faded away
But those that the ladies had got at, on the ground unconscious they lay.

An ambulance was required by some of the foe,
The ladies victims to hospital should go,
The local paper got wind of this outrage,
And on the following weeks issue made the front page.

Therefore all you men when running at night,
When local yobbos appear keep out of sight,
Stay clear of the jungle if you can god willing,
For deploying there selves the girls take top billing.

Tony Bartlett

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Denise Ellis and I were really looking forwards to this our 5th OMM. We had prepared well with long multi-terrain runs culminating in the Clarendon Marathon just three weeks before. So with confidence, we stood on the starting line grid, waiting for the Claxton with Ted Rockliffe and his mate Sam, veterans of three OMM's starting one minute behind us. The two teams had decided to forget the rivalry, join forces and brains [*for the orienteering bit*] and race together 'for a laugh'. Famous last words! Our confidence had only slightly been dented the evening before at registration, when we were mistaken for supporters instead of competitors! Did we not look like well honed, prepared, experienced mountain marathon athletes? Well maybe we were a little older than most, being only one of two female vet teams in our class of 370 teams!

Our start time was 08:48. It was very windy, overcast, but not raining--- yet. The weather the previous week had been so wet that the organisers nearly cancelled the event because of flooding. The fluorescent yellow signs at the start saying we were to do the bad weather course, glowed ominously. We had on our industrial strength mascara and enough body spray and deodorant to last 36 hours. The Claxton sounded. We were off!

The first indication of what was to come was the volunteer OMM official who could hardly stand upright let alone separate the maps to give to us because of the now gale force gusting wind. His words were snatched away as he tried to say we were to omit five checkpoints, not just the two on the original bad weather course. Denise exclaimed if we didn't finish this shortened course then there was something wrong with us. Famous last words! He also said rather jollily and with great glee that the wind would subside, but ha ha it would rain and become torrential and persistent! It was the Lake District, it rains, and we expected it to be wet. We had the all the kit, down to a last minute purchase of snazzy, must have, fashion pioneering ankle gaiters, a bit of rain was not going to deter us!

The two teams set a bearing and settled into a long steep uphill crocodile to the first checkpoint. Easy! It had started to rain. Sam was the only sensible one and put on his waterproof trousers. Ted lost his map in the wind, and was rescued by me performing a speedy if ungainly rugby sliding tackle in the boggy ground. One of many times I would be on my back sitting in water. The second checkpoint was easy enough, a stream source. There were plenty of hand rails [*for those of you not in the know, these are tracks and boundaries and easily recognised landmarks on the maps which pin point your position*]. The third checkpoint had us crossing a road, the Honnister Pass. Denise, tongue in cheek pointed out that one way lead to the overnight camp and the other back to the event centre. Not for a moment did it occur to us to take the road to the camp. The rain and wind was beating down on us, but wasn't the wind supposed to be abating? A lone sheep knew better. It was sheltering besides a building which we now know was the slate mine where many competitors took refuge. On and up we went. There was no shelter. The paths became treacherous water courses, streams became almost uncrossable torrents. The wind whipped our feet from under us then threw us to the ground. I crawled on hands and knees. The force of the wind sucked and threw Denise against a rock [*her words*] and she cracked her head. Ted struggled with an injured knee. I fell and sprained my thumb, there was no time to stop and examine injuries. We were getting very cold and wet. The third checkpoint, an exposed spur lay horizontal in the grass. We sheltered under some rocks to set a bearing for checkpoint nine. We forced some food down. [*A mini pork pie for me on recommendation from two adventure racers in the club*]. On and up and up we went. We passed Great Gable and the cairn at Dale Head at 753 feet, the highest point of the route. Somehow the two teams separated. Where were Ted and Sam?

We held onto a post for dear life. Exciting/terrifying eh? We saw grown men whisked into the air and tumble to the edge. Where were Ted and Sam?

At last they appeared then, oh no, disappeared again. The visibility deteriorated, the wind was roaring, [*we learnt later at up to 100 mile per hour*] the rain seemed to be coming uphill at us, and we had to cross an exposed bare rocky area. Both of us were trying to hide our fears from one another. I contemplated [*crying that is*].

We had to go on. There was no going back. [*Little did I know this Creature Comfort/Wallace and Grommit comment made when we got back to the event centre the next day in front of a TV camera would be broadcast all round the world!*] We were becoming hypothermic.

We had waited 10 minutes hanging onto that post. There was hardly anyone else around. We called out to a passing team. Yes they had seen two older geezers sheltering. It must be Ted and Sam.

Phew! They hadn't gone over the edge. But why had they stopped? Ted and Sam would have to look after themselves. Do we dare let go of the post? Two Geordies ran by. They knew the area. We knew the path eventually lead into the valley. We now only had one map between us. If we lost that one then we were doomed! We followed them, not along the path but straight over the edge into the wind and down a steep 300ft decent on screed. What had we done?

We were blinded by the rain which felt like razor blades on our faces. The wind vented its anger on us. I looked back. Denise was following, her teeth chattering too much to voice her fear. I was so proud of her [*my eyes are watering with emotion as I write this!*][*Later Denise finds tiny bruises all over her rear from falling on the sharp screed*]. We get a little respite from the wind. We must keep up. Next thing we know we are on top of checkpoint nine.

We could see the camp. Odd, no tents? Were we the first back? Don't be silly! A muddy slippery decent to checkpoint 10. We wade thigh high across a bridge to the finish. No welcoming party?

A volunteer was holding the finish checkpoint as there was nothing to stick it into. Water was gushing everywhere. Portaloo's were floating.

We were ushered into a half built barn. 700 others had made it too. The event was cancelled at midday. It was 16.20. There was no way we could have known. There was no communication, no mobile phone network. We had persevered despite the adverse conditions and despite all odds, proud to be the last of the 130 out of 370 teams in C class to finish on the first day.

A lot of what happened next was seen on TV and was in the papers and on the radio. Those who did not understand the event thought we were selfish and reckless to put ourselves and others at risk. They thought the organisers had been irresponsible. The competitors mostly loved the challenge. The weather conditions had been the worse the event had experienced in its 41 years. We were scared, but have come away from the event stronger people. Will we do it again in 2009? **YES!**

As for what happened to the other team of Ted and Sam? Well that's their story!

Tina Vivian



P.S. Thank God for waterproof mascara, one needs to look good on TV, whatever the circumstances!



Member Profile – Linda Ladner

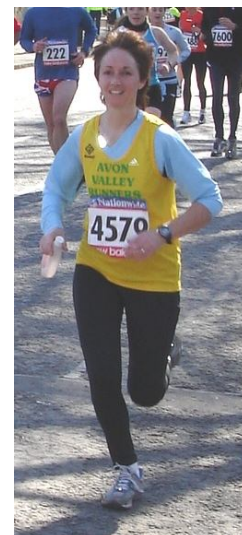
Date of Birth:	13 th May 1964	Residence:	Winsley
Height:	5'3"	Shoes:	Currently Asics, but anything discounted will do.
Weight:	8st 3lb		
PBs:	10K: 48:35 – Castle Combe 2008	10 Miles:	76 mins – Oldbury 2005
	Half Marathon: 1:38:10 – Cheddar 2005	Marathon:	4:23 - Plymouth 1982

I used to run 800 metres when I was at school and thinking that was a longish distance, felt inspired to enter the inaugural **Plymouth Marathon** in 1981, not realising that you were supposed to train in order to get around in one piece! I enjoyed the experience but played too many other sports to have the time to take running seriously.

I began running again with Tina Giles, Kath Reckless and Dinah Hancock when I moved to Winsley. This was an attempt to keep fit and to work around a young family. We had an enjoyable evening with a glass or two of wine, the excuse being to come up with a name for our small group and the Winsley Whippets were born (I still have the T-Shirt) and then the rest of the bottle was consumed. We entered a few races, one being the **Marshfield Mudlark** where we chatted to Phil Mitchell who mentioned AVR. Eventually I joined the club with my husband Kevin, if I had to suffer then so did he. Running together helps us to 'encourage' each other, although I am normally grumbling about 'trying to keep up' stumbling a few yards behind his lordship. My first half was Bristol 2003 in 1hr 52 and every half after that I ran faster until my best time of 1hr 38 at Cheddar. Those were the days! Unfortunately the trend is now in the wrong direction.

I have enjoyed the support and encouragement of AVR members at races, and on club nights there is always someone wanting a 'gentle' run to keep me company. The last couple of years have been frustrating due to minor injuries and niggles but I am still hoping to reach my peak. Kevin is sniggering as I write this as he reckons that has long gone!

Greatest achievements so far include winning my age group category in the AVR championships (all other contestants were injured or on holiday) but particularly holding off Ted Rockliffe to be part of the 2nd team home for the **BernCol relay** in 2007!



Caption Competition Time

Wiltshire Times photographer Glenn Phillips captured this shot of Michael Towler crossing the boggy field clutching his muddy running shoes during this year's "Over the Hills" 12K Multi-terrain race. *Michael even got his mum (Tina) to clean them for him after the race!!!*

The photo is crying out for a caption, so a bottle of bubbly is on offer to the best suggestion submitted to me by the 18th December. To further add to Michaels' embarrassment we will publish the most humorous captions in the next edition of the Valley News!

news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

Stop Press: The first race(s) of the 2009 AVR Race Series will be the **Bramley 20/10** on Sunday 15th February. Your position in either the twenty or the ten miler will count, and the series will be expanded to include the best ten positions from any of the thirteen nominated races. It is also planned that AVR will run a coach to this event. Details of the race (and entry forms) can be found at www.readingroadrunners.org/bramley.htm