



Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

#127 - September 2011



Merthyr Mawr

In the year of our Lord AD1968, Judy and Stan Farr and myself, Gordon Russell, three athletes from Trowbridge AC set off for a weekend running at something called "Merthyr Mawr Distance Camp". On arriving we discovered that there were club athletes from different parts of the country at the camp. We were put up in a youth centre of sorts which had dormitories, plus kitchen, toilets and showers (I think), plus a large meeting room.

Saturday morning began with breakfast - what else! We then trooped into the meeting room and met the organisers, Tony Ward - an influential man in British athletics at the time, and coaches Frank Horwill and Harry Wilson. Incidentally Harry went on to coach a young lad from Brighton called Steven Ovet (I'm not sure if he achieved anything in athletics!)

After listening to a long introduction by Tony, Frank and Harry about the basics of distance running and a question and answer time, we then changed into our running kit. We were instructed to jog to the beach - 1 - 1 1/2 miles away where we discovered beautiful sandy beaches ideal for running. The thing which stands out in my mind - after all these years - is the "Big Dipper" which consisted of a very steep sand dune with very loose sand. We set off in single file at intervals to run up the hill where Harry was positioned at the top (to encourage us!). At the top we turned right along a ridge of about 30 - 40 yards and down again and back to the start only to do it all over again - many times. It seemed to go on forever. When the morning session had finished we jogged (raced) back to base camp for lunch followed by half an hour lying on our beds before the dreaded command came through "back to the beach". This really was a jog this time as 30-40 knackered athletes returned to see what delights were in store for us in the afternoon. From memory much of the spring had left our legs and minds and the return to base for the evening meal was very welcome. Sunday followed a similar pattern and we once again sampled the delights of the "Big Dipper" before returning home.

It was an exhausting but beneficial weekend with good fellowship with runners from all over the country none of whom I can unfortunately recall the names of, although Judy does remember that Bridget Cushen, who is now involved in Masters Athletics, was there.

Why am I now trying to remember all of this? Well I haven't been back to Merthyr Mawr since then until very recently. You will notice that I am wearing the tee shirt purchased that weekend (which still fits!) I wore it for a couple of years and then put it away for the next 40. (Who says I am a hoarder?) Although I couldn't find the youth centre I did find the dreaded "Big Dipper" which looked even more daunting than it did 43 years ago!

Gordon Russell



The Melksham Mash

A bit of a low turnout but a fun time was had nonetheless by the thirteen participants of the Melksham Mash held on Wednesday 27th July, where the aim was to find as many of the 25 flags which had been deviously placed around the run route and note down the four letter word found at the flag position. A simple bit of map reading skill is required in order to navigate the route and find the flags which have a varying amount points allocated to them depending on how far they are from the start. A time limit of 90 minutes is given which of course includes getting back to the start.

Some members teamed up in order to maximise coverage of the flags whilst others ran solo and concentrated on the higher points flags in a bid to maximise the benefits of any potential (chocolatey) prizes at the end!

There was a tie for 1st place between Richard Morgetroyd and the Fun Girl 3 (Sarah Jewers, Rebecca Brown, & Victoria Thomas) with both scoring 190-points and walking away with a box of Celebrations to share or not...

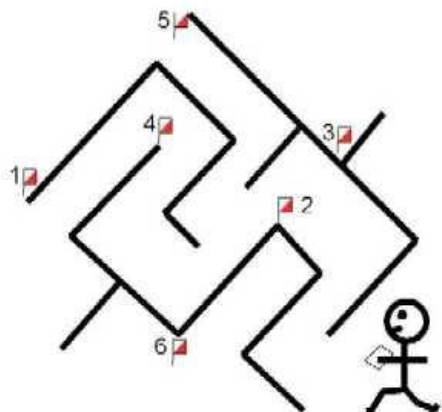


In next was Richard Southgate with 170-points; then a tie for a box of Maltesers between Team Newman (Richard & Holly) and Team Wrintmore (Darren, Kira & Jaret) with 160-points; then Stuart & Lynne Henderson with 150-points and finally Sean Oakman with 140-points.

What still remains a mystery to me however; is what did all those words mean, do they make up some kind of subliminal message? – Suggestions please to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

aMAZEing Orienteering

The plan was to let the kid's burn off some energy in the adventure playground whilst I sat by the lake and fed the ducks – such is the limit of my athletic endeavours these days. However on entering Swindon's Lydiard Park we were greeted by the sign “aMAZEing Orienteering here today”. Having enjoyed the Mendip Mashup this was worthy of further investigation.



North Wiltshire Orienteering club (NWO) had set up a maze constructed of plastic barrier fencing with participants having to navigate their way to find the electronic control points, where you ‘checked in’ using a special swipe card. Once all of the controls had been visited in order your swipe card is downloaded at the finish and a printout produced giving feedback on how quickly you navigated the maze. The ordering of the control points increased in complexity and within an hour both Kira & Jaret had conquered all ten variants. It was now time to tackle a ‘real’ course.

NWO had located 13 control points within Lydiard Park and created three courses of 2K, 3K and 4K. We opted for the shortest course as I didn't want to dampen the enthusiasm of the children by getting lost on

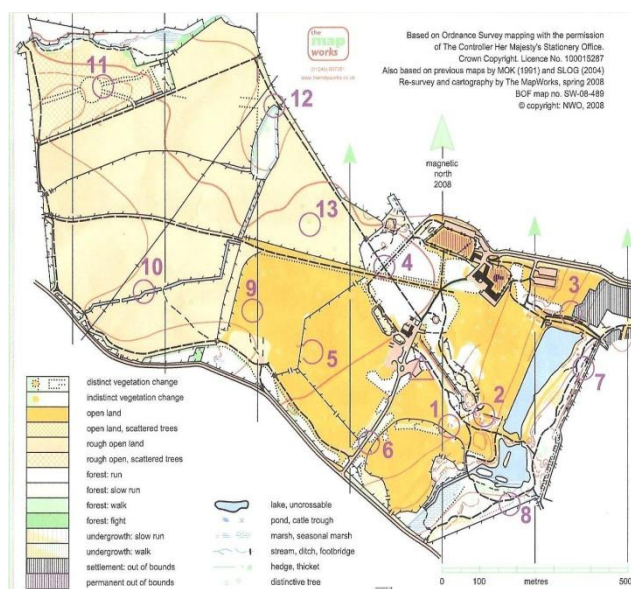
a longer route and also it looked like we would have to go past the ice cream van that I had spotted earlier.

My map reading was able to get us within a few metres of each of the control points and then it was down to younger keener eyes to actually locate the checkpoint and record the control letter. Once all of the controls had been visited in order, it was on to the finish with the keyword that the control letters had spelled out. At the finish it was confirmed that we had the correct keyword and presented with an application form to join NWO – we did.

Earlier this year NWO received a grant from Sport England to run the aMAZEing Orienteering initiative and take it to a number of Wiltshire towns. Two weeks later and it was in Chippenham and I had a wet and lonely trudge around Monkton Park – but still enjoyed it nonetheless.



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On Saturday 10th September NWO will take aMAZEing Orienteering to Springfields school in Calne and then on Saturday 24th September it comes to Trowbridge Park. Come along and give it a try – it is aMAZEing!

Darren Wrintmore

Bern-Col Relay

Was it the promise of a fish and chip supper, the lure of a revised course or just the opportunity to race in the beautiful Avon Valley on a summers evening? Whatever the reason, nearly 60 members including many from our latest Beginners Programme turned up in Bradford on Avon on 4th August for the Bern-Col Relay. Teams of three were picked **at random** from seeded groups to take on the new course of around 1.7 miles, which avoided running in the road along Pound Lane and kept runners in Barton Farm Country Park, along the Kennet & Avon canal towpath, through Victory Fields, past the Tithe Barn and handing over outside of the clubhouse in Culver Close.

Taking the lead a mile into the second leg, the team of Pamela B, Wrinty and Andy Grist took victory in a combined time of 34:18 winning the prize of 12-months worth of bragging rights. The next team home were Sarah Jewers, Patricia Quayle and Carl Davies followed closely by Fiona Newman, Tony Royle and Thomas Coney.

Pictured right are the winning team, not all entirely ready for the camera!



Calling All Melksham Runners

It's been noticed by the Melksham faithful that the numbers attending the Wednesday night sessions at the Christie Miller Sports Centre are on a downward trend. We hope this is just a summer seasonal glitch and you will be joining us again soon!

Just to remind you we meet each and every Wednesday come rain or shine in the first floor bar area at 19:00. In order to stimulate a bit of interest we are organising a hash run on the 14th September where a trail will be set leading to a local watering hole for post run refreshments.

Pictured right is our meeting place at a busier time. Happy days...



Member Profile – Rich Newman

Date of Birth:	21/11/1964	Residence:	Melksham
Height:	6 foot 3 inches	Occupation:	Support Worker – Homeless Project
Weight:	13st 10 (On a good day!)	Shoes:	Brooks GTS
PBs:	5K: 22.31 Melksham 2010	10K	46.53 Bromham Pudding 2010
10 Miles:	1.22 Wiltshire 2010	Half Marathon	1.48 Chippenham Half 2010

In the past I had always had a fear of running, mainly due to the sadistic nature of my old PE teacher at school who took great delight in reminding me of my shortcomings and lack of fitness. A real Hitler with a whistle and Green Flash trainers! My sporting achievements were limited to being the egg and spoon champion in 1975 and 76 (Amazing what chewing gum can do!).

During my 20's and 30's I played a lot of local football, but called time as I couldn't keep up with the young whippets that were running circles around me; this coupled with some bad knee injuries. There then followed some years of very little physical activity were my weight ballooned and I began to have more chins than a Chinese telephone directory. This was mainly due to work, raising a family and being bone idle. I realised that I needed to do something as my waist gradually expanded. I had known for some time that AVR existed, but thought that it was home to only elite runners, and convinced myself that I would not fit in. I tentatively went along to the Melksham Group one Wednesday night and really enjoyed it. Since then I have made some good friends, had a laugh, and really begun to enjoy running and its benefits.

Running has now become a bit of an obsession in the Newman household with both my wife Fiona & daughter Holly joining AVR and running on a regular basis. Thanks to everyone who helps make things run smoothly at the club and for making it so enjoyable.



All Those Years Ago

Tales from the "Valley" 5, 10, 15 & 25 years ago:

<p>2006: Andy Hawkins was first AVR man home and 1st MV40 at King Alfred's Torment held on 24th September.</p> <p>Also in action that day was Mike Maidment who completed the Berlin Marathon in a time of 3hrs 34mins.</p>	<p>2001: Darren Wrintmore was the first of the Avon Valley Runners contingent of five entrants at the Great North Run on the 16th September. He completed the gritty northern course in a time of 1hr 30mins and 30secs. Post race celebrations consisted of a tab and some brown ale.</p>
<p>1996: The Quantock Beast was tamed by Stan Farr on 7th September of this year; he completed this multi terrain event in a time of 55:16.</p> <p>Danny Kay entered the New Forest Marathon and was the 100th runner home in a time of 3:39:06.</p>	<p>1986: Sheila Jennings was the 1st over 50 to complete the Women's Own Nike 10K event on 14th September.</p> <p>Phil Mitchell completed the SCBU 5 mile event in Trowbridge in a time of 29:08 and claimed third place on the winner's podium.</p>

Fixtures

Sunday, September 11th	Chippenham Half Marathon** - Chippenham @9:30
Sunday, September 18th	Melksham 10 – King George V Park Melksham @10:00
Saturday, September 24th	Uphill to Wells Relay – 1 st leg starts at Uphill beach Nr Weston-Super Mare @11:00
Sunday, September 25th	Blackland Downs Challenge – Blackland Health Club, Calne @11:00
Sunday, October 2nd	Badminton Horseless Trials – Badminton Park @11:00
Sunday, October 9th	Swindon Half Marathon – Swindon @11:00
Sunday, October 16th	Westbury Lions 10K – White Horse Country Park @11:00
Saturday, October 22nd	Weymouth 10 – Weymouth Pavilion @10:30

** Race Series Event ++ Off-Road Championship

Avon Valley Runners Website Celebrates 10 Years

Incredibly it is 10 years since the Avon Valley Runners website was launched at Geocities. It was the culmination of a long summer of work for the web developers toiling over their seven line display Eresmus Mk III computers day and night typing line after line of binary code.

When they finally emerged from their former pigeon loft they found the world had moved on where no-one played *Jet Set Willy* anymore and simple HTML editors now existed for the creation of stunning websites and they'd missed a fine summer of racing.

Never mind; if it wasn't for those early pioneers we wouldn't have the slick website we now enjoy and which has become an important part of the Avon Valley Runners toolkit.

Congratulations to those visionaries who helped create that first site and many thanks to the individuals who continue to maintain the current website.

Foxtrot 5

Sunday August 28th saw this years running of the **Foxtrot 5** mile race in Broughton Gifford with 136 runners completing this fast course. For Avon Valley Runners, Michael Towler came home in 3rd position with a new personal best for the distance of 26 minutes 45 seconds.

Warren Wade also claimed a new personal best of 29 minutes 37 seconds. Kathy Kinsey was the first of our ladies home and claims 20 points in the club race series.



1



2



3

1. Michael Towler on his way to 3rd place and a new PB.
2. Warren Wade and Richard Morgetroyd on a quick first mile.
3. Carl Davies at the back of the field for a change acting as sweep runner.

With this new PB for Michael, there are some changes to the club standings for fastest runner over the **5 mile** distance. The revised standings are as follows:

1 – Tom Fisher 26:13 –Foxtrot 2010
 2 – Keith Elsey* 26:42 –Bowood 1988
 3 – Michael Towler 26:45 –Foxtrot 2011
 4 – Andy Robertson 26:55 –Frome 1995
 5 – Bob Roots 27:22 –Lockeridge 1988

1– Jackie Rockliffe 30:42 – Frome 1995
 2– Judy Farr 30:47 – Westbury 1988
 3– Rosemary Barber+31:13– Donhead 1993
 4– Linda Brown++31:45– Corsham 1990
 5 - Liz Ringham 31:54 – Foxtrot 2008

*Keith also ran 27:06 at Westbury in 1989.

+Rose also ran 31:53 at Highcliffe in 1993

++Linda also ran 31:47 at Broad Town in 1991

Coming Soon To A Park Near You....

Southwick Country parkrun is a FREE weekly 5Km event for runners of all standards, which will take place every Saturday at 9am with the inaugural event being staged on 3rd September in Southwick Country Park, Southwick, Wiltshire.

It is not a race against other runners, but a 5k timed run and it can really be whatever you want it to be, whether that's for fun or as part of a training plan.

It offers an opportunity for all the local community, male or female, young or old, to come together on a regular basis to enjoy this beautiful park and get physically active into the bargain. We want to encourage people to jog or run together irrespective of their ability – this event is truly open to all and best of all it really is FREE!



Taking part is easy – just register in advance by 6pm on the Friday before your first ever parkrun at <http://www.parkrun.org.uk/southwickcountrypark/>. You only have to register once to obtain your barcode which you need to bring along each time you run. Then just set your alarm for Saturday morning and get yourself there!

After the run, if you don't have to get off straight away, there will be the chance to socialise with everyone at Squirrel's Tearoom within the park, to maybe swap stories about your run that day, chat to other runners over a cup of tea or coffee and just be an important part of this new running community.



So whether you are a complete novice looking to get yourself started on your own "running journey" or a seasoned athlete wanting to use this as a part of your training schedule, you're welcome to come along and join us.

The parkrun coming to Southwick was conceived by the Southwick Country parkrun committee with the help of the Senior Countryside Ranger, Leo Wirtz of Wiltshire Council.

Although there are no on-going costs as parkrun is run entirely by volunteers the initial equipment is financed by the following very kind organisations: Avon Valley Runners, Westbury RunEngland Group, Wiltshire and Swindon Activity and Sports Partnership, Run4fitness and parkrun.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Sean Price