



# Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

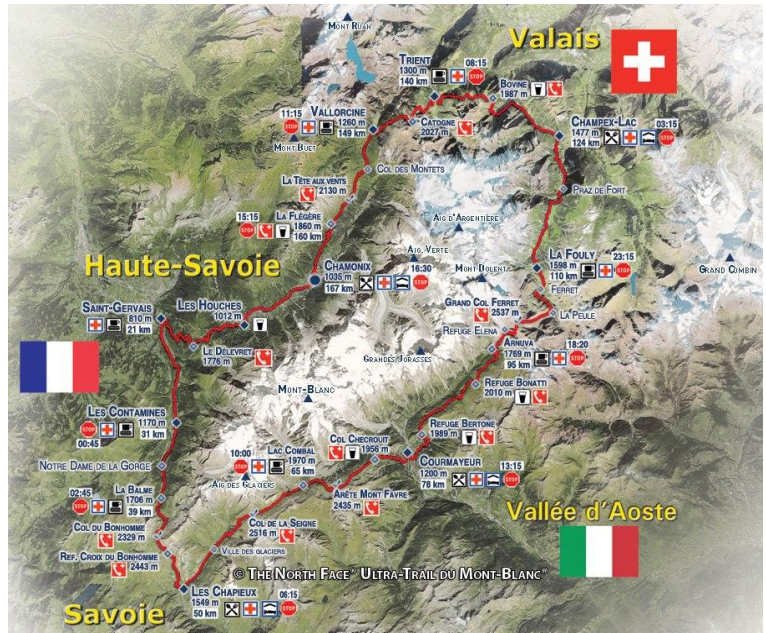
#128 - October 2011



## Mont Blanc Ultra

To set the scene; the **Mont Blanc Ultra** is a 104 mile run with over 9500 metres of ascent, travelling through 3 countries all done within 46 hours. Each of the 2300 starters must have qualified by completing 2 or 3 ultra runs before they can enter. In 2009 I entered this event on the back of completing the **Marathon des Sables** in 2008. It didn't go well with me collapsing at 74 kilometres. *This time I was a bit more focused.*

It didn't start too well with a 5 hour delay due to bad weather which just added on 5 hours until you could sleep again. Very heavy rain mixed in with thunder and lightning and low cloud added a bit of bite to the start but still the streets were packed with supporters at 11:30 at night, great atmosphere.



The run to Les Houches was a nice warm up and it was a relief to get going. But as soon as we started the first climb up the Col da Voza, the full force of the weather hit you and it got worse the higher you climbed. Now in full water proofs I made the first summit and headed down the very slippery descent into Saint-Gervais passing a guy with a broken arm or shoulder. At the check point I filled up on salty soup, coffee and full fat coke and helped myself to as much food as I could and then shuffled on.

The next section was a gentle climb up to les Contamies, but the path gains and then losses height for about 15 kilometres, which can get on your nerves a bit. But once you get to la Balme you are on the way up.

Day light had come and now I could see where I was. The last time I was here I was in a whole world of pain, completely blown away by the climbs, hallucinating and feeling very sorry for myself. This time I felt much better, feeding well and being able to see made a big difference also little things like resting my poles against an electric fence and giving myself a shock which woke me up and made a French guy laugh which made me laugh. The climb up to the Col du Bonhomme was a steady precession which was within my pace but there was no hurry to get past people as I wanted to save myself a bit and by now it had started to snow.

## Mont Blanc Ultra

This again made me smile as what else was the weather going to do next and I did think about building a snow man but there wasn't enough there so I shuffled on down towards Les Chapieux. Another feeding station where I fed well but made the mistake of topping up my banana flavoured drink with the French tomato and herb flavoured drink which nearly made me sick every time I drank some, I kept on trying to swallow it as fast as I could so I didn't taste it.

The rain eased a bit as I started the 10 kilometre climb up to the Col de La Seigne, already a lot of runners were moving with heads down. As I hit the zig-zags the water proofs came back on and the snow covered the ground again, but the more you climbed the warmer it became as you could see the sun trying to burn through the cloud above. At the top you pass into Italy and straight away I could see the green valley below which looked warm and sunny so I shuffled down to Lac Combal. I got there in good time about 2 hours inside the cut off which was my plan. I flushed out my water bottles refuelled and was off again, next stop Courmayeur.



On the way I made it over the smaller climb of Mont –Farve I seemed to be flying over taking many runners. The descent into Courmayeur was highlighted as a difficult section in the guide and it bloody well was very hard. I wasted about 20 minutes in the sports hall trying to change and re fuel but there were a lot of people crashed out in there, best keep going. Maria cheered me on and shuffled along with me until the bottom of the next climb. This in my mind was the start of the crux of the race.

The 800 metre climb up to the Refuge Bertone was the hardest so far and the day was now very warm. In front of me was a young girl who I could have got passed but I had learnt not to push too much on the climbs and the view was nice looking down on Courmayeur.

From the Refuge the route traverses until you reach Arnava, another feed station. Here I met an American guy called Chris who was staying in the same hotel, he had done the next section of the course and warned me of the climb up to the Grand Col Ferret saying it was long and continuous which it was but the only saving grace was that you couldn't see the top as it was in thick cloud, so much cloud that you had a problem seeing the ground.

The top came after about 90 minutes and this was a great point in the race as it's the highest point with 100km gone and 24 hours in time, from here it was downhill for about 20 kilometres but it wasn't easy going. The cloud was so thick a group of us lost the path. In a moment of clear thinking I told everyone to turn their lights off and we were soon able to see a runner in front of us and we were off after him.

The course was now littered with runners who had decided to take a nap. As I was running on my own this was not an option. At midnight my guts wouldn't take anymore cereal bars and I was sick so I kept going but made sure I drank more. I didn't let it bother me and after about an hour I ate a small piece of malt loaf which didn't feel too good but it was something. The next feed point was la Fouly where I explained that I had been ill and wanted to take food from here onwards which was fine with the staff there. I kept topping up on coke and Tuc biscuits and the soup which was great.

The next section was fairly straight forward with not too much climb and I soon found myself in Champex-Luc with the morning nearly upon us. Forcing down cooked pasta and trying not to be sick took a lot of concentration, so back to the soup and stale bread washed down with more coke and coffee.



## Mont Blanc Ultra

The route now changed with a 1000 metre descent before going back up to Bovine and then a 1000 metre climb up and down to Trient where I met Maria again. This was the only time I was starting to get a bit pissed off because there was confusion in where the course went and what we were meant to be doing. At the feed station we both found out that I had 1000 metres of climb and 25 kilometres to do in about 9 hours so I should make it, but I was struggling on the descents as my feet were very sore. I could keep going on the climbs but it was the descent where people over took me.

It was a beautiful day as I reached the top of the final major climb. From here the path traversed around the back of a ridge before descending steeply into Vallorcine where again plenty of people passed me but I was still on my feet and heading down. Maria met me for the final time here and cheered me on saying that I had 300 metres of climb and 18 kilometres to do in 5 ½ half hours. I actually ran away from the check point as I had been told that it was easy from here. There was a 200 metre climb up to the Col des Montets and then a gentle path down to Argentiere and then about 8 km and 100 metre climb to Chamonix. The first bit was fine to Argentiere but the bit after that just felt sooo hard. I suppose because I had time in hand I did slow down but the path which I thought was going to be easy wasn't or felt very undulating and very uneven and was a killer on my feet. Up until this point I had kept a high level of concentration on foot placements to the point where I hadn't stubbed a toe once during the race so far as I knew that a fall could put me out of the race. But now I was starting to trip over rocks and nearly fell a few times. Even when the path came back down to run along by the river it then turned back up and climbed away from the river leaving me a bit disappointed.



I phoned Maria as I knew I was taking a long time and the hallucinations had started as I saw items of clothing hanging in the woods. But then I passed a few people cheering us on and they told me it was all downhill from here on. The forest track gave way to tarmac and I was passing through the outskirts of Chamonix but not in an area I knew so there was still a way to go.

Fortunately I recognised a building and instantly knew where I was and that I was going to make it. I turned a corner and could see and hear Maria cheering me on, I don't mind saying that I had to choke back a few tears there. Andy and Zoe a couple we had met at Bristol airport were also there to cheer me on. Andy had been unlucky having missed the cut off at Courmayeur by 10 minutes but was keen to welcome me home. The crowds grew as I made my way through the streets of Chamonix. I made a phone call to my daughters so they could hear all the cheering and cow bells.

## Mont Blanc Ultra

This is why we do these things, the adulation and the feeling of having achieved it and the personal pride and the promise of a cold beer!! My feet stopped hurting as I rushed for the line, leaving Maria to cross the line behind me, it was over I had made it, 170 kilometres 9700 metres in 43 hours 50 minutes, Job done now time for that beer.

I got away with a few large blisters on both heels but had worse on the Marathon Des Sables.

What would I have done different? - More hills is the key, I spoke to one guy who had done 3 Bob Grahams as training for this event but he was aiming for under 35 hours. Seeing that I struggle to get a 200 metre climb in Wiltshire I don't think I did too badly!

Would I do it again? - You bet, I would I think this is the best race I have ever done, but I have made a promise to Maria so I won't be back next year but who knows.

Thanks for the support, I got a stream of texts and facebook messages from Denise and Tina which were much appreciated.



*Ian Harryman*

## Quote of the Month

“Daddy, Avon Valley Runners are winning the Relay!”.....

Jaret Wrintmore, Aged 9 - whilst watching the 4x400m heats at the World Athletics Championships in Daegu.



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



## Error of the Month

Upon receiving notification of his performance and race pictures from the Chippenham Half Marathon, Richard Morgetroyd noticed something very strange about the opening line of the email from *SportCam Ltd* which read “Dear Vivienne, congratulations on completing the 2011 Chippenham Half Marathon”

## Avon Valley Mile

What the event lacked in quantity of runners it certainly made up for in quality. New member Dan Woolford led from the start to record a winning time of 4:42, and setting a new club record for the mile in his first run as an Avon Valley Runner. Just three seconds behind and also inside the old club record was Michael Towler. Warren Wade continued his recent good form to finish third to lower his personal best time for the distance down to 5:10.

In the Ladies race, SuperVet Linda Ladner was the first to cross the line at the event in Barton Farm Country Park recording 6:38, seventeen seconds ahead of fellow SuperVet Rosemary Barber. In third place, 13-year old Holly Newman was the first "Senior" lady finishing in 7:05.

The AVR all-time list of milers now looks like this...

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Dan Woolford 4:42 – Bradford on Avon 2011    | 1. Jackie Rockcliffe 5:37 – Bradford on Avon 2006 |
| 2. Michael Towler* 4:45 – Bradford on Avon 2011 | 2. Jo Mumford 5:48 – Bradford on Avon 2006        |
| 3. Michael Bryant 4:47 – Bradford on Avon 2006  | 3. Tina Giles 5:57 – Bradford on Avon 2008        |
| 4. Andy Hawkins 4:49 – Bradford on Avon 2007    | 4. Mitzi Barber 5:58 – Bradford on Avon 2007      |
| 5. Richard Bailey 4:55 – Tewkesbury 1988        | 5. Rosemary Barber 6:22 – Bradford on Avon 2007   |

*\*Michael Towler also recorded 4:48 at the Avon Valley Mile in 2008*



The motley men's crew wait impatiently for the off.



Holly Newman and Dan Woolford with their respective prizes.

# Southwick Country Parkrun

Avon Valley Runners were well represented at the inaugural Southwick Country Parkrun 5K on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September with the first four runners home coming from the club. Warren Wade was first to complete the 2 2/3<sup>rd</sup> lap of the park in a time of 18:14 followed by Richard Morgetroyd in 18:51, third was Richard Hudson in 19:27 then Michael Pace who took exactly 20 minutes.

First of our lady attendees was Sue Macgregor who was placed 20<sup>th</sup> in a time of 23:28.

As described in last month's Avon Valley News, this is a weekly event and is free to enter and relies upon the support of volunteers to keep it going each week. If you've not already given it a go I urge you to do so and if you don't feel like running then you can always volunteer as a marshal or timekeeper. For further information see [www.parkrun.org.uk/southwickcountrypark/home](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/southwickcountrypark/home)



Warren Wade sets off like a greyhound chasing a Hare.



Richard Morgetroyd is sure he's seen a red squirrel and gives chase.



Richard Hudson checks his watch to see if he has time for another lap before breakfast.



Mike Pace puts on his best Sly Stallone face for the Rocky finish.



No pained face for Sue Macgregor who was looking as fresh at the start as at the finish.



## The Melksham Hash

Further to the appeal in last month's Avon Valley News for more runners to attend our Melksham sessions on Wednesdays, it was good to see fifteen members and prospective members attend the hash run that was held on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

A good and varied trail was laid by 'Hares' Darren Wrintmore, Richard Morgetroyd and Vicky Thomas; however the 'Hares' were out foxed whilst dithering outside the West End Inn at the very end of the trail by Carl Davies who had left the remainder of the pack sometime earlier to hunt alone.

Hopefully this event will restore numbers to the Wednesday sessions, Tammy Phillips has already run a couple of her **Slow but Social** groups and encourages others to join her. Tammy describes her group as a friendly, supportive group of AVR members who run at a gentler, steadier pace than some of our AVR friends. Do you fit the following criteria?

Are you looking to run in company but at a slightly less challenging pace or over a shorter distance than the current AVR groups run?

Do you want to return to running after a break over the summer?

Are you a beginner who wants to run more often?

Do you run for fun and to keep fit rather than to compete?

Would you simply like to come for a sociable run with like-minded people?

If so, then please join us at Christie Miller Sports Centre at 7pm every Wednesday.

## All Those Years Ago

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

<p><b>2006:</b> It was with much sadness that the club recorded the passing of founder member Stan Farr.</p> <p>Alistair Bartlett brought home a team of four Avon Valley Runners at the <b>Fordingbridge 10</b> mile race in exactly 1 hour claiming 4<sup>th</sup> place overall.</p> <p>Andrew Hoddinott dusted off his running shoes and had a go at the <b>Swindon Half Marathon</b> and led a team of three AVR participants home in a time of 1:50:47.</p>	<p><b>2001:</b> Brett Flook took on the challenge of the <b>Snowdonia Marathon</b> on the 28<sup>th</sup> October and came home in 20<sup>th</sup> place in a very credible 3hrs 4mins and 45 seconds.</p> <p>Whilst Brett was running in the Welsh valleys Kevin Sparey was leading a contingent of nine Avon Valley Runners home at the <b>Stroud Half Marathon</b>. His time at this event was 1:21:58 earning him 82<sup>nd</sup> place overall.</p>
<p><b>1996:</b> Simon Spedding scored a new personal best time of 1:21:57 at the <b>Solent Half Marathon</b> on 13<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>AVR claimed the mens and ladies team prizes at the <b>Warminster 10K</b>.</p>	<p><b>1986:</b> The Autumn edition of the Valley News reported that membership of the club had passed the fifty mark. The secretary also advised that club vests and T-shirts were available at a very reasonable £4.50!</p>

## Fixtures

Sunday, October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Swindon Half Marathon – Swindon @11:00
Sunday, October 16 <sup>th</sup>	Westbury Lions 10K – White Horse Country Park @11:00
Sunday, October 16 <sup>th</sup>	Tadley 10 – Tadley Hampshire @10:00
Saturday, October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Weymouth 10 – Weymouth Pavilion @10:30
Sunday, October 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Stroud Half Marathon – Stroud @10:00
Sunday, October 30 <sup>th</sup>	The Stickler** 10.1 mile multi terrain – Shillingstone Dorset @10:30
Sunday, November 6 <sup>th</sup>	Wiltshire Road Relays (4 x 4 miles) – Castle Combe Race Circuit @11:00
Sunday, November 13 <sup>th</sup>	Over The Hills – Bradford-on-Avon @10:00
Sunday, November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Gosport Half Marathon – Gosport Hampshire @10:00

\*\* Race Series Event ++ Off-Road Championship

## Special General Meeting

On the evening of Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September the club held a Special General Meeting to gain club sanction for the following two proposals that address the standing down of Darren Wrintmore as Honorary Secretary at the next AGM and the decision of Sarah Jewers to stand down with immediate effect from her role as Assistant Secretary.

The first proposal was that: **Julia Green nominated by Darren Wrintmore and seconded by Andrew Hoddinott be elected to the committee as Assistant Secretary.** *This proposal was carried unanimously.*

The second proposal was that: **New elected committee positions are created for the role of Membership Secretary, Road Secretary and Off-Road Secretary and that the roles of Captain and Vice-Captain be removed from the club constitution, which should also be updated to reflect the new created positions.** *This proposal was also carried unanimously* and allows the new role of Membership Secretary to take on the management of the AVR membership database and liaison with England Athletics for the registration of athletes and tie up with DB Max Tri for those participating in multi-sport activities. The Road/Off-Road Secretaries would be elected at the AGM in January and take a more strategic approach as to what races Avon Valley Runners target and would appoint Captains on a race by race basis and solicit support from the club membership for events.

*The following members have been co-opted on to the committee to assist in the transition of the responsibilities currently held by the Honorary Secretary: Sean Price, Fiona Price, Tammy Phillips and Katie Pope.*

## Virgin London Marathon Club Places

Avon Valley Runners have been allocated three club places for the 2012 Virgin London Marathon to be run on Sunday 22nd April. These places will be drawn by ballot on **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October** before training in Bradford on Avon. The ballot is open to Competitive members who have more than one year's full contiguous membership of Avon Valley Runners and were rejected from the Public ballot earlier this year. Please pass evidence of your rejection onto Darren Wrintmore prior to the draw, so that your name can go into the hat.



## Member Profile – Hayley Southgate

<b>Date of Birth:</b>	24/03/1964	<b>Residence:</b>	Bowerhill, Melksham
<b>Height:</b>	5' 11"	<b>Occupation:</b>	Charity Admin, Valldata Services Carer for my octogenarian parents
<b>Weight:</b>	11st 2lbs	<b>Shoes:</b>	Mizuno Wave Inspire

### PBs:

<b>5K</b>	25.41 – Melksham 5k 2011	<b>10K</b>	55.21 – Corsham St Georges 2011
<b>5 Miles</b>	42.26 – FOSMs 5 Chippenham 2011	<b>Half Marathon</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> attempt next year hopefully!

I loved sport at school & adored Sports Days, especially the skipping race! My Dad was a boxer and made me a leather rope which I still have to this day. As the 4<sup>th</sup> child of 5 living in a cramped 3 bed house, I needed room to let off steam. Dad taught me a bit about boxing and I went to trampoline club. Then a teacher suggested that my parents send me to the local athletics club.

I became a member of Bracknell AC in 1975 and enjoyed 8 very happy years with them as a sprinter and high jumper. In those days ( God I sound old! ) cinder tracks outnumbered all weather 'Tartan' tracks. So it was a great privilege to run at venues like Crystal Palace & to represent Berkshire at the English Schools Champs.. Winter training consisted of road runs, circuit and weight training. Then age 16, I was invited by coach Jim Spooner of Reading AC to train with his sprint group alongside Beverley Goddard & Kathy Smallwood (later Cook). Kathy was my idol as she was also very tall, but there is no way I could ever equal her speed!

In 1983, I joined the RAF, one reason being all the sporting opportunities. I competed for Strike Command on the track, but later discovered the delights of the NAAFI & sadly put on weight. My soldier husband to be wasn't put off though and we are celebrating our Silver Wedding Anniversary this month!

We've lived on Bowerhill for 23yrs & have 2 children & I've always tried to keep fit mostly with Aerobics & the gym. However, I joined AVR 2 yrs ago & what a nice bunch of people you are. - I wish I'd joined sooner! My stamina really needs working on as unlike in my sprinting days, running isn't all over in under a minute anymore! I enjoy helping to marshall at events & when is the next group social to a local Chinese/Indian restaurant please? Good times, lovely club ☺



THEN & NOW!

## *Uphill to Wells Relay*

Avon Valley Runners fielded two teams in the 29-mile Uphill to Wells Relay on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September, which starts on Uphill beach in Weston Super-Mare and finishes on the lawn of Wells cathedral.

First off were the Ladies with Kathy Kinsey running a superb leg to reach the handover at Loxton in the lead. On the second, 3-mile leg Rebekah Scott suffered a navigational error resulting in the loss of the lead. On Leg-3 Melanie Nicholls took up the baton and tried to close the gap down on the run to Black Rock at Cheddar before handing over to Claire Howard. Unfortunately Claire also suffered from a misfortune in navigation resulting in her reaching the handover at Draycott from the wrong direction. Linda Ladner however had a storming run as she climbed out of the village and retook the lead. Ali Atkinson then took the baton on from Priddy to Wells but was joined by Mendip Hills Hash House Harriers and both crossed the finish line together for a dead heat and the Ladies still holding on to the title that they won in both 2009 and 2010.

Starting an hour later, the Men's team were led out by the in-form Warren Wade who spent a brief spell in the lead before handing over to Richard Hudson in third place. Richard ran a solid leg before passing onto Carl Davies. Carl managed to pull back a place on the 6.5-mile leg to Black Rock, where Brett Flook set about clawing the team back into contention. Darren Wrintmore picked up the baton in Draycott and ran a good uphill leg before handing over to Thomas Coney for the glory leg into Wells, where we finished second to Mendip Hills Hash House Harriers for the second year.



Carl Davies looking relaxed in search of Black Rock.

*Darren Wrintmore*

