



# Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

#137 – July 2012



## Club 5K Record Smashed

June it seems has been a month for 5K races with good attendance by club members at various local events. The bar has been raised by Michael Towler for the overall club record for the distance which now stands at 15:53. He achieved this at the Melksham 5K on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June which also saw Fiona Price attain a new personal best time of 20:17.

Meanwhile in Trowbridge at the Jubilee 5K race on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June in the MV60 class, Frank Lamerton managed a stunning time of 21:46 and was placed 15<sup>th</sup> overall out of a field of 120 runners.

It was initially thought that this was a new club record for this age group, since the age related records, as published in the April edition of the Valley News had the record as 22:21 set in 2011; however there was a slight error and the mantle still rests with Bernie Hobbs who set the bar at 21:22 at Melksham in 2010.

Also held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June was the Heddington 5K where Joby Hobbs claimed 1<sup>st</sup> place in a time of 17:19; with dad Bernie claiming 11<sup>th</sup> position in a time of 21:47.

Bernie's time was only 1 second off Frank's time at Trowbridge so we are expecting some close competition in the coming months between these peppy pensioners to best the MV60 club record. Perhaps it will fall at the Springfield 5K on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July which is the next Wiltshire Race League event. Hope to see you there!



**Michael Towler leads the pack at Melksham**



**Martin Croucher chases Frank Lamerton through the underpass at Trowbridge**



**Fiona Price aiming high for a new PB at Melksham**



**Andy Mumford on his way to a new 5K PB of 21:50 at Trowbridge**



## Avon Valley Mob Match

Avon Valley Runners entertained local rivals Chippenham Harriers, Corsham Running Club & Frome Running Club at a Mob Match in Bradford on Avon. A field of around sixty runners assembled in the rain at Barton Farm Country Park before tackling the seven miles of the club's "Over the Hills" (which is being held on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November this year) course, only in reverse.

Leading home was Avon Valley Runner Michael Towler who recorded a time of 44:29, over three minutes ahead of second placed Martyn Taylor of Frome Running Club and Stuart Henderson of Corsham Running Club. With Avon Valley Runners taking seven of the top-ten positions enabled team captain Tim Lowrie to accept the Mob Match title on behalf of Avon Valley Runners with 14 points, ahead of Frome Running Club (54pts), Corsham Running Club (98pts) and Chippenham Harriers (107pts).

In the Ladies race Ruth Barnes of Avon Valley Runners was first back in a time of 54:27 ahead of club mate Fiona Price. With Avon Valley Runners finishing in the first nine positions the club was able to easily retain their Mob Match title with 3pts, which was accepted by team captain Denise Ellis at the presentation held at the "Lock Inn". Chippenham Harriers finished second with 94 points just edging out Frome Running Club with 97 points.

Complete results of the Mob Match can be found at [www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk)

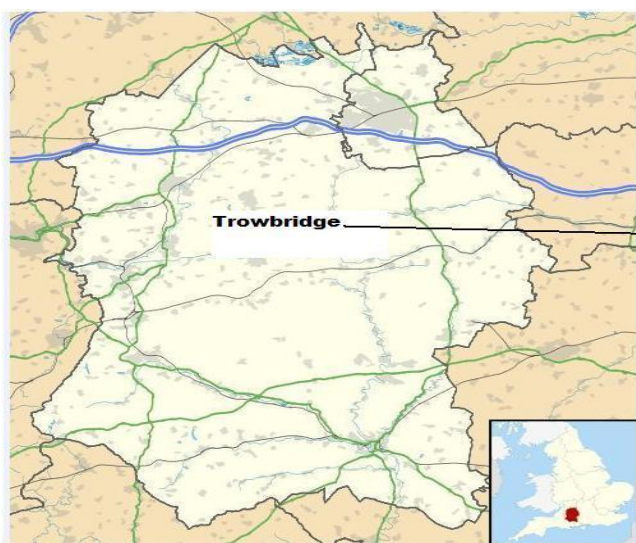
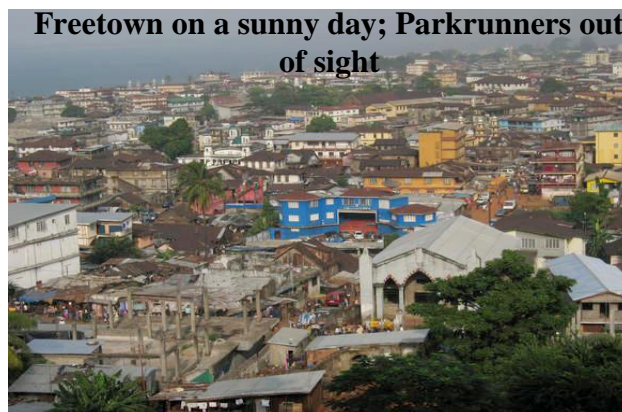


**The Mob prepare for the start**

## Far Flung Parkrun

Inspired by attending the Southwick Country Parkrun two members of Avon Valley Runners who are presently out in Sierra Leone's capital city Freetown; Phil Harding and Mike Bryant have set up a local off shoot to inspire some of the locals to get out running 5K on a regular basis. It's a little more ad hoc and doesn't have the sophisticated time recording facilities of the official Parkrun but it regularly attracts a dozen or so runners on an out and back loop of the beach road.

Well done to Phil and Mike for spreading the word!



The road from Trowbridge to Freetown is a long one. Don't try running it kids....

## All Those Years Ago

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

**2007:** It was noted in the 'All Those Years Ago' feature in the July 2007 edition of the Valley News that Gary Eagle had won the 1992 **AVR Trowbridge 10K**. – By some strange coincidence he was back recently as an unattached runner to claim 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the 2012 **Diamond Jubilee 5K** in Trowbridge.

**1997:** A welcome to the Valley was extended to Frank Lamerton in the July 1997 edition of the Valley News. – I'm pleased to say that Frank is still running strongly with the club and as reported above recently attained the MV60 club record for the 5K distance.

It was also reported in that same edition that following the success of the previous event a Barn Dance was to be held later in the year. – Does anyone remember this? – It would be great to hear your barn storming tales.

**2002:** Stuart MacGregor and Tina Vivian took on the **Charmouth Challenge** to the top of the Golden Cap on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July; whilst the following day Anthony Hickson was seen taming the **Quantock Beast**. Then on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July Doug Barber and Paul Clarke had a frap round the **Frampton 10K**. – A busy time indeed!

**1987:** The Village of Biddestone was alive with the sound of pounding feet as it laid on two events on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July which AVR were well represented.

The 6 mile race attracted eleven members with the team being led home by Gerry Fice in 34:38 whilst a further ten members chose the Half Marathon with Martin Connor claiming fourth place in a time of 1:21:26.



## Rozza's Road Runners



Hi All, and welcome to jubilant July, I've got some cracking races lined up to tempt you out of your sun lounger!

We have two Wiltshire Race League events this month. Firstly on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July we have the **Springfield 5K** commencing at 19:30 from the Springfield Leisure Centre in Corsham; entry is a very reasonable £3.00 and details can be found [here](#).

Secondly the **TBAS 10K** at Castle Combe Race Circuit will take place on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July commencing at 11:30 and is race number 7 in the race league series. Entry is £12.00 in advance or £13.00 on the day, the race is being organised by DB Max and will be chip timed with lap splits and an instant print out of your result! For more details and online entry have a look [here](#).

There is a great local event in the form of the **Frome Half Marathon and 10K** which you may also be interested in. This will be happening on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July at 10:45. Entry is £15.50 for the half and £10.00 for the 10K. For value for money I'd go for the half, definitely more miles for your *buck*! More details and entry form can be found [here](#).

If any of you fancy a midweek 5 miler then there's one in Pewsey called (wait for it...) the Pewsey Midweek 5 Mile on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August. Entry is just £7.00 in advance or £9.00 on the day. More details and entry form are [here](#).

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August, Wiltshire Athletics Association will be hosting a **Half Marathon Training Day** from Christie Miller Sports Centre in Melksham. The day includes run sessions led by Team GB International runner, Holly Rush and coach led sessions by UK: Athletics National Coach Mentor Martin Rush as well as Half Marathon Q&A, Nutritional advice and the chance to win free entry into a number of forthcoming local Half Marathons including Devizes, Malmesbury and Cricklade. The cost will be just £12.00 per runner, though discounts will be available to clubs with ten or more runners attending. This event is open exclusively to members belonging to Wiltshire Athletic Association affiliated clubs and registration is in advance only.

Please contact me on [roadrace@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:roadrace@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) if you're interested in taking part in this.

*PC Warren Wade (Road Race Secretary)*

## Hickson's Dirty Tracks



The off road championship is shaping up with Michael Towler leading the men; however Tim Lowrie gained 20 points at the Ninesprings event to move up to third position. Tina Vivian presently leads for the ladies.

The next championship event is the **Barbury Castle Ramparts Run** on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July at 19:30 which is a five mile jaunt along scenic trails around the iron age hillfort. Details and entry form can be found [here](#).

Following that we have the **Roundway Rampage** on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August entries are £8.00 if you pre-enter with an additional £1.00 charge if you enter on the day. Details are [here](#).

The **Avon Valley Relay** is being held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July and is a traditional pass the baton relay from Melksham to Bradford-on-Avon Rugby Club. Details have been given in previous editions of the Valley News; however you may still be in with a chance to join a team. Check out the AVR Facebook page for the latest information.

Other multi-terrain events taking place in July which I would recommend are as follows:

- **Mad Dash 5K** – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July, charity 5K race for Bath RUH. Details are [here](#).
- **Melksham Street 'O'** – Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July at Christie Miller Sports Centre, Melksham at 19:00.
- **Quantock Beast** – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July, 5.7 miles across the Quantocks. Details are [here](#).
- **Chippenham 5K River Run** – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July. Details are [here](#).
- **O2 Creation 10K** – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July, 10K race starting at Bath Racecourse. Follow [me](#) for details.
- **Magor Mash 10K** – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July, this race has something for everyone. Be sure to [look here](#).

If you are not running the Bristol Half Marathon this year, if you love cross country running, if you love team events, if you would like to visit all 8 visible white horses of Wiltshire, then let's enter an AVR team for the **White Horse Relay**. Have a look at the [website](#), there are photographs of all the stages taken at about every tenth of a mile. There is even a film of part of the stage around Steeple Ashton. Let me know if you are interested.

*Anthony Hickson (Off Road Race Secretary)*

## Members Profile – Ryan & Mel Jones

### Ryan

**Date of Birth:** 18 February 1972

**Height:** 5'10

**Weight:** 10st7

#### PBs:

**10K:** 42 Mins ish...

**Half Marathon:** 1:34

**Residence:** Melksham

**Occupation:** Self Employed IT person

<http://www.yourithelp.co.uk>

**Shoes:** Mizuno Wave

**10 Miles:** 1:10

**Marathon:** 3:40

### Mel

**Date of Birth:** 18<sup>th</sup> August 1966

**Height:** 5'6

**Weight:** 9st7

#### PBs:

**10K:** 53 Mins      53 Mins

**Half Marathon:** 1:55

**Residence:** Melksham

**Occupation:** Locum Vet Nurse

**Shoes:** Saucony Omni

**10 Miles:** 1:29

**Marathon:** 4:15

We're a sad couple I guess, as we only took up running as it was a sport we could do together! We started maybe 7-8 years ago and our first run managed about 200m before being puffed. But, we persevered and joined Hayes and Harlington Road Runners club in West London, and eventually got a bit fitter and managed some good race times. Our times above are approximate as we can't remember the details of where or when. Maybe our bodies try to make us forget?

We've had a travelling sabbatical over the last few years, touring Europe and Morocco in a little campervan, and then 4 months backpacking in Asia (see <http://www.doyourdream.co.uk> for our travel blog). We ran a fair bit when away as it was a great way to see new places, but our performance dropped significantly. (Photos are from Christmas Eve on

one of our trips!) On our return and my parents wanting their garage back, we toured the country and chose Melksham to set up home and our IT support business. Why Melksham? Well it's flat, got a lovely canal and countryside, and everyone seems really friendly – our first trip to AVR showed what a nice bunch you all were, and we liked you all so much we bought a house nearby!

Over the coming months we will be committed to AVR to get up to speed again and hope to do the Bristol half in September and get a reasonable time within 5-10mins of our PB's. We really enjoyed the sociable Melksham pub visit recently – hope it becomes a regular thing!





## *What's Become of My Uncle Bill? – A short story by Ken Marshall*

I stopped at the traffic lights at the junction of the B4365 and the road down to Aberthaw and I could see three people in the car in front who I guessed would be joining me tomorrow morning in the Eglwys Brewis 10 kilometre race taking place at RAF St. Athans. It was supposed to be a flat, fast course, being on an airfield; and that would be good for PBs. My personal best so far was forty four minutes and nine seconds and I was confident of beating that tomorrow. I guessed those kids in the car in front would be joining me because they had a handmade sticker on their rear windscreen which read “St Athans here we come” and another smaller one which read “Tilehurst Trotters” with a silhouette of a man and a woman wearing skimpy running gear and looking all athletic, like as if they were striding out on a run. I looked nothing like that when I ran but I could run reasonably well for my age. I was hoping to finish in less than forty three and a half minutes, which meant my average pace would be just under seven minutes per mile. I'd never achieved that before so the flat, fast Eglwys Brewis 10k at RAF St Athans was probably the best chance I was going to get. Even if that was a snail's pace compared to some of the youngsters who would be there, it was pretty good for a forty year old who'd never really done anything sporty since his schooldays.

I arrived at my Uncle Bill and Auntie Megan's house in Llanmaes Road and parked the car as near to their driveway as I could. I hadn't seen Bill or Megan for over twenty years and apart from arranging this trip, I hadn't spoken to them for nearly twelve years. I wondered what they would look like now. I wondered what they would think of me, slightly balding but still very fit looking. I knocked on their front door and while I waited for someone to answer, my thoughts drifted back to my youth. When I was a little boy I used to watch my Uncle Bill playing on the wing for Llantwit Major FC and Megan used to make me fruit cake with huge cherries in it. After Bill stopped playing, instead of going to the match they'd take me to the park and let me throw sticks for their dog Tinker, and I would treat him with a polo mint that he would crunch until his mouth dribbled with saliva and the polo was all gone. Tinker must have been dead a long time now and I wondered if Bill and Megan had got themselves another dog to take his place.

The door opened and I was greeted by an elderly looking lady with thick silvery hair and a waist line that she would probably prefer not to have. Megan threw her arms around me and hugged me like a bear. She looked more wrinkled than I remember but still very smart like as if she looked after herself a bit.

“Ben. How nice to see you after all this time.” She said, with a Welsh accent as thick as double cream. “Come in. Put your bag down by there love. Let me take your coat. We've been so excited about you coming; we've been like two school kids waiting for Christmas.”

“It's good to see you to Auntie Meg. I can't believe time's gone by so quickly.” I said. “Is Uncle Bill around?”

“He's gone off to bed, love. He was a bit tired this evening and he asked me to apologise to you and said he'd see you in the morning.”

I imagined Bill in his advancing years nodding off in front of the fire and needing to make his way to bed before the ascent became too much of a struggle for him.

“I've got to be gone quite early Auntie, I'm meeting up with some of my mates from the running club before the race. Will you and Uncle Bill be coming?”

“Of course we will love. Wouldn't miss it for the world! Bill usually gets up early so he'll be around before you go and we'll come along later. The crowds are a bit of a trial for us these days so we tend to leave it to the last minute.”

Megan made me a cup of tea and some beans on toast. Any more than that might have had an adverse affect and I wanted to be at my peak for the morning. If nothing else I wanted Bill and Megan to be suitably impressed that I could run well and was a fit, healthy young man; and even at forty I could still put in a creditable performance.

She instructed me in the geography of her kitchen and gave me directions to my bedroom before bidding me goodnight. I wasn't ready for bed yet but I could understand that this elderly couple would need their sleep. I guess that's what happens when the body begins to deteriorate. Sleep is a welcome release to the aches and pains that accompany life during advancing years. I was nowhere near there yet. My body was still capable of running just over six miles at a cracking pace. I felt invigorated and healthy and I was looking forward to the flat, fast Eglwys Brewis 10k at RAF St Athans.

In the morning I got up before I could detect movement from anywhere else in the house. I went downstairs to gather my kit and make sure I had everything I needed. Shoes properly tagged with timing chip; race number pinned to my vest; a *nurofen* tablet to ease any swelling joints; a banana and a cereal bar to consume just before the race and a couple of calorie gels for added energy. Oh, and a bottle of *lucozade sport* for hydration; just what I did before every race really. Most runners have their own little ritual and this was mine. I was comfortable with it and it worked for me.

I heard a noise at the top of the stairs and went into the hall. Bill was making his way down and I wasn't really prepared for the sight that met my eyes. What had become of my Uncle Bill? He looked thin, gaunt, almost emaciated. His pyjamas were hanging off him; but it wasn't that which surprised me most. It was the way he negotiated each step; sideways, very carefully and he could only manage to place one foot on the lower step before bringing the other one down to join it. Only when both feet were momentarily at the same level would he risk further descent. This was a tortuous process and no doubt indicative of his frailty. Why didn't they buy a bungalow? That would be far better for someone in his condition, but I had no mandate to suggest this. It was up to him and Megan and I wouldn't have felt comfortable drawing attention to it.

"Ben. Good to see you lad. I'll be there in a sec."

"Uncle Bill! Take your time. I've waited twenty years for this, a few seconds more won't make much difference. Auntie Megan said you'd gone to bed early. Did you sleep well?"

"Like ten bears." He said, laughing. He stood next to me and just like Meg, threw his arms around me in a tight hug. Damn, there was nothing of him. It was like holding onto a drainpipe. What a contrast between his frame and mine. Despite running twenty five miles or more every week, I'm a little bit thick set. I mean, it gets increasingly difficult to get rid of the extra weight around the middle. I'm convinced I'd run faster if I could lose some of it but to be honest I like my food too much. Bill was like a rake compared to me and I wondered what pathological ailment had done this to him. I wouldn't dare ask.

"Go and put the kettle on Ben, I'll be in the kitchen in a few minutes. I'd like an Earl Gray with milk and two sugars. You'll find it all in the cupboard nearest the window."

I detected a slight panting in his breath. The mammoth effort on the stairs must have taken it out of him. Two sugars though *and* posh tea! Maybe that was his way of boosting his calories to replace some of the energy lost during the manoeuvre on the stairs.

I made the tea and waited. Bill was probably taking a cocktail of pills and was too embarrassed to let me watch. After a few minutes he arrived in the kitchen and sat down clumsily at the table. His breath was heavy and he sounded like he was suffering from some dreadful lung disease like pneumoconiosis or maybe pleurisy or something. I struggled to remember the strong, lithe figure that used to race up and down the touchline when I was a lad. Age had been unkind to my Uncle Bill and I was determined not to let the same thing happen to me. I would keep myself fit and healthy. I would run until my knees could no longer cope with the pounding and then I would cycle; and when I could no longer cycle I would walk briskly and play golf or something. Seeing Bill had given me the impetus to maintain a lifestyle that would help me avoid the onset of age related infirmity. It didn't have to be like this. Bill had once been my hero but the frail old man in front of me, who could hardly breathe, let alone walk, was my reason for being different. In any case I was still only forty something. *I* could run; and I could run well.

Bill's breathing gradually became easier and as he sipped his tea, we talked about the last twenty years and what I'd been up to in that time; my jobs and my girlfriends and all that sort of stuff. Unconsciously I avoided the subject of his own past fitness. I was too afraid and embarrassed to draw attention to his current state of health, or at least the lack of it. "Uncle Bill, I need to get going. I've arranged to meet up with some of my mates from the club. We like to go through a bit of pre-race ritual and get warmed up and all that. Will you explain to Auntie Megan and tell her I'll see you after the race."

"You go Ben. We'll be along a bit later. I don't cope well with the crowds at the start, so we'll probably leave it to the last minute. I hope the race goes well for you. Have you got a target time?"

"I have, but I'd rather not say it yet just in case I don't make it. You take care and I'll see you later." I felt so sorry for him. Me, going off to take part in a race over six and a bit miles and he, probably wishing he still had the strength to walk half that distance.



The race was well attended. There must have been over five hundred runners at the start. I managed to find two of my running partners but in the congestion we lost the third. It wasn't easy to see who else was there and anyway it was time for me to concentrate on myself. The chip timing meant it didn't matter how long it took to reach the start line after the gun went off; each individual timing was based on when we crossed the start line and when we crossed the finish line. I could relax and think only about what I had to do and not worry about who was in front or who was behind. After warming up I placed myself somewhere near the front of the crowd, a little way back from the elite runners, and the gun fired. I kept to a fairly even pace for the first mile or so and then picked it up a little. I was wary of setting off too fast but at the same time, I had a target and I needed to keep somewhere close to it so as not to give myself too much to do at the end. Three miles in and I was doing well and feeling good. The flat terrain of the airfield made it easier to maintain a decent pace; and I had about thirty seconds in the bag which would help me if I was struggling at the end. With a mile to go I faded slightly but was still well ahead of my target pace. The effort over that last mile was intense and I felt myself slowing down. With a hundred yards to go I gave it everything I had and as I crossed the line I looked at my watch. Forty three minutes, twenty one seconds. I was elated. I'd cracked the seven minute mile and that felt *so* good.

I could celebrate with my fellow runners and more than that I could let Bill and Megan know how pleased I was to have run *so* well and to have done what I'd set out to do. They would be proud of me *and* pleased, even if they didn't really understand the significance of a seven minute mile.

As I proudly walked away from the finish line, my heart pounding and my lungs aching, I heard my name being called from the side and saw Megan shouting in my direction. Bill was standing there smiling, clearly too weak to call out. He had a heavy coat wrapped around his shoulders and even though the weather was mild, I guessed he must have got cold standing there for the last forty five minutes.

"Well done Ben." Megan shouted. "We'll see you at home later. We'll have a nice tea waiting for you love."

I waved at them both in recognition and went to find someone from the club with whom I could share my success. 43:21; what a performance!

Later that evening after a celebration with my running mates at the *Blacksmith's Arms* in Llantwit Major, the front door opened at Bill and Megan's and I was surprised to find Bill standing there in a jumper and a pair of shorts. The last time I saw him he looked like he was ready for a kip on the settee.

"Come in Ben. Good race." He shouted. "The results are up on the internet already. Auntie Megan's just looking at them now. I need to nip out for a few minutes but I'll be back before you go. Go and have a bite to eat. Megan's made corned beef pie." Then with an agility that belied his condition he stepped nimbly past me and disappeared through the front garden gate.

I walked into the kitchen and saw my Auntie Megan peering into a computer screen. She pushed the laptop towards me and grabbed a pair of oven gloves to bring the corned beef pie out of the oven. I scanned the list at roughly the time I knew I'd finished. I noted the list of surnames, many of them sounding very Welsh; quite a few English ones too and even one the same as mine; Scrivener. I was interested in them all and especially their ages, but right now I wanted to see my own name and make a note of my own performance. Secretly that's what we all did.

*Position: 103, time: 43:19. Category: Male Veteran. Age: 40 plus.* Fantastic! Two seconds less than I'd thought. That was the accuracy of the chip timing for you. It would go down on my club's website as a *Personal Best*; my first for over three years; and how I'd worked for it.

"I did it Auntie Megan." I said. "I was under my target. I finished in a time of 43:19. How's that for an old boy?"

"Well done Ben. That's excellent." She said. "I didn't see your Uncle Bill's time. Can you find it for me love?"

"What?" I looked at her with incredulity. My eyebrows more furrowed than they needed to be.

"I want to know what Bill's time was." She said. "He never really cares much but I'm always interested. You know!"

"You mean Uncle Bill ran the 10k? Today?"

"Of course he did. He's done it every year for the past six years, since his knee operation. Didn't he talk to you about it?" She asked.

"But he could hardly walk down the stairs when I saw him this morning." I protested. "He didn't look capable of running to the kitchen let alone running six miles."

"Oh that's normal if he's run the night before." She said, raising her eyes to the ceiling. "He did five miles last night and then after he wakes up, his knees are really stiff. The daft old bat; It takes him a while to get them working again."

"You mean he ran five miles the night before a race?"

"I know." She said "He's a bit mad, but he loves it. I've told him I'm not pushing him in a wheelchair when he's old and decrepit. If he gets to be an invalid he's on his own."

“But when he came into the kitchen he could hardly breathe, Auntie Meg. He sounded like a chronic asthmatic, not long for this world.”

“Oh, I expect he’d just done his exercises in the front room. He likes to do them every morning. Press ups, then sit ups, then more press ups – apparently; though I can’t say I’ve ever seen him do them. I don’t know why he does it really. It’s a bit daft if you ask me but he reckons it keeps his heart healthy.”

“Good grief,” I said, raising my voice a little disrespectfully. “No wonder he was puffing and panting when he came into the kitchen.”

So despite what I’d seen with my own eyes, Bill was a fitness fanatic and didn’t care to tell me. There *was* something a bit odd though and I was afraid of rumbling Auntie Megan’s elaborate tale about my Uncle Bill and his part in the race. “But I saw him with you at the finish line Auntie Meg. You both waved me in, remember? If he was in the race how come he was on the sidelines with you?”

“Oh, he’d been back a couple of minutes by then. He never has the energy to speak much after a race and he doesn’t like to get cold. I wrapped him up, waited to cheer you in then we came on home.”

“A couple of minutes?” I shouted again. “He finished a couple of minutes before me?”

“Yes he did, but we don’t know his time yet. Be a love and have a look.”

I scanned the list again and realised who the familiar name I’d discovered earlier, belonged to.

*Position: 54. Name: W.Scrivener. Time: 39:58. Category: Male Super Veteran, Age: 60 plus.*

All of a sudden my measly effort paled into insignificance. Bill had finished the race in less than forty minutes; nearly three and a half minutes ahead of me and he hadn’t even bothered to look at the results.

What’s become of my Uncle Bill? I’ll tell you what’s become of him. He’s sixty four years old and can still whip the pants off his young nephew over ten kilometres. That’s what’s become of him!

“Auntie Meg, this is awesome” I said pointing an accusing finger at the computer screen.

“He’ll be a bit disappointed.” She said. “He thought he might have beaten last year’s time and he’s missed it by four seconds. Would you like some corned beef pie, love?”

***Ken Marshall***