



Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

#148 – June 2013



Neolithic Half Marathon

After years of wanting to run The Neolithic Half Marathon, and never being able to because of other training commitments, I thought this year would be a good opportunity. For more incentive I entered, and won the March AVR competition 'Race For Free', and was given the £25 entry fee, which definitely made up my mind to *Go For It!*

We set off early in search of 'Charlton Clumps', the starting point for The Half Marathon. Parked up, thinking we were in the right place (along with a lot of others), only to find we were at Redhorn Hill, so had to drive about 1.5 miles along a 'sump busting' track to reach Charlton Clumps.

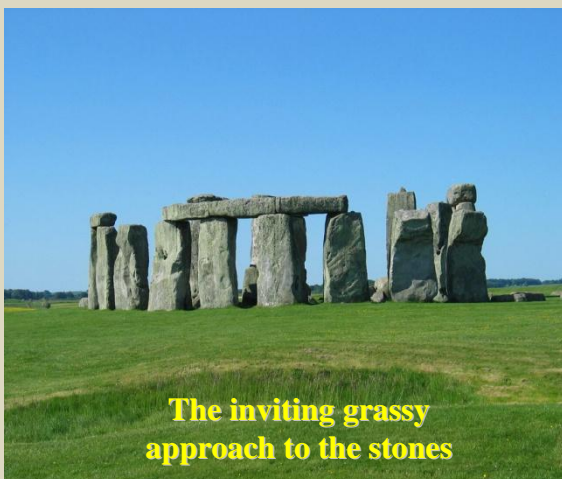
The 1st coach full of runners to arrive at our point, from Stonehenge, to my horror had dogs with them. We soon learnt that 'The Cani X' race started half an hour earlier than ours. I registered just in time before several more coach loads arrived.

It was a beautiful morning, so no problems waiting on the start line, where we were given a short briefing, which included which birds to listen out for etc. - after all the event was in aid of Wiltshire wildlife Funds.

It was soon evident that most of the terrain was stony track, which was no problem as it was dry. The visibility was good so we were able to take in all the stunning scenery around us.

We were soon passing walkers, who had set off much earlier. The miles seem to be eaten up quickly, although it was tough going with several hills en route.

The finish, as usual was a welcome sight, now with Stonehenge in view. The grassy approach was inviting, and after crossing the finish line in a time of 2.06 -not a bad time for a 63yr old, although I would have been ashamed of it a few years ago - was given a medal and a meal voucher. You couldn't fault the organisation, especially considering they were catering for Bikers, walkers and runners. I immediately made my way to the refreshment tent where I was given a brown carrier bag full of pizza, cake and fruit, then a welcome cup of tea. Next I went in search of my bag which had been transported from Charlton Clumps to Stonehenge by bus. Entering the baggage tent I had no time to look around before a lady who had spotted my bib number thrust my bag into my hand - sorted!

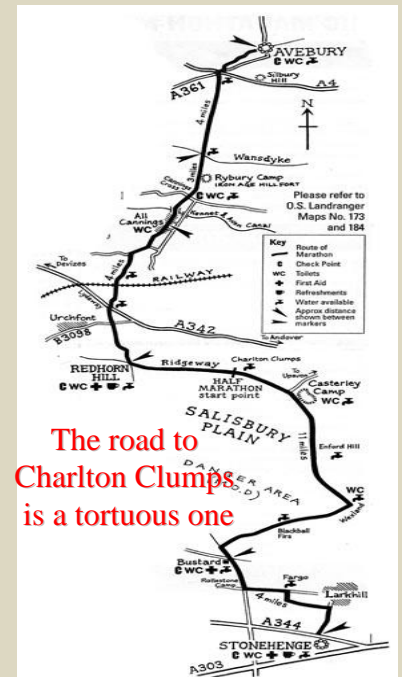


The inviting grassy approach to the stones

After sitting on a hay bale with others to eat my goodies I went in search of transport to Charlton Clumps. This was no problem either, I was told the 1st coach was waiting and would leave in 5 mins. After a 40min journey I was at last re-united with my ever-patient husband, who had been in the middle of nowhere since 10am. He had, however seen Ray Withey and Mike Carpenter, who were passing the check point on their marathon walk. He also saw Danny Kay half way through his Marathon. He is now very close to his 500th!

I was really pleased that I entered and enjoyed the experience, and would recommend this event to anyone. Thank you AVR for giving me the opportunity.

Rosemary Barber



The "Shaw Stampede"

One hundred runners lined up for the eighth running of the Shaw Stampede and Keane Kanter fun run organised by Avon Valley Runners and Stampede Sports. In the 10-Kilometer Stampede the runners tackled some of the most technical and picturesque terrain in the area, as it passed along the bridle paths and country lanes around the villages of Shaw, Whitley, Neston & Atworth. First home in a time of thirty seven minutes and eleven seconds was Simon Campbell of Cirencester AC who was over two minutes ahead of second placed Mark Garrett of "Running Somewhere Else" and third placed Andrew Malloy of Bristol & West AC. In 4th place Simon Bowers of "Running Somewhere Else" claimed the 1st MV40 prize and 14th placed Martin Pitts also from "Running Somewhere Else" was the 1st MV50.



Avon Valley Runners Richard Morgetroyd concentrates on the technical terrain as the race gets underway



Winner Simon collects his prize

In the ladies race Sue Hall from Corsham took victory in 45:06 ahead of our very own Jackie Rockliffe and third placed Helen Connor of Bath. Debra Kearsey of Corsham Running Club was the 1st FV40 and Debbie Barry of "Running Somewhere Else" was the 1st FV50. With their members making up nearly a third of the field, it was no surprise that the Cirencester based club claimed the Mixed team prize.

In the 2K Keane Kanter Fun Run Josiah Burgess was first across the line for the second year and even more impressive that he had finished fifth in the Southwick Park Run earlier in the day. Jessica Tait from Whitley was the first girl.

A big thank you to all of my AVR club mates who helped to make the event a great success. The event was very well received by its participants and has gained positive feedback via Facebook, though disappointment was expressed that this would be the last running of the Stampede, though I did say something similar back in 2005.

It is hoped that the event has raised over £600 for Bristol Area Kidney Patients Association.

Darren Wrintmore – Race Director



The Running Somewhere Else team covet the AVR inflatable start line

Parkrun Handicap



I Won-Yes really!

The Oxford English Dictionary describes a Handicap as: a circumstance that makes progress or success difficult. I already had at least 3 circumstances that would mar my progress around Southwick Country Park for the annual AVR Parkrun Handicap; Age, weight and a severe lack of physical talent. Also I don't do 5k and I don't do fast-it hurts! However always eager to turn up in Club colours and encourage my fellow club mates to also make fools of themselves I committed myself to the event.



For a late May evening it was cold but dry. I had been assured I only needed road shoes as the Infamous Puddle corner was dry and the run surface was firm. I pitched up with fellow AVR mate Liz Gard (rapidly improving) to register and find out our handicaps. Secretary Sean Price had a slick system with Chip timing experts Jim and Sheila Skinner. If you had completed a Parkrun your handicap would be your fastest time over the course. I had done one in Dec 2011 dressed as Mother Xmas so my time to set off was when the clock hit 30.40. Had I not done the route before I would have gone off at the back with the fastest runner-phew! Liz was going off 5 minutes after me so no pressure there then!

Other runners started to arrive and nervously receive their Handicaps. The obligatory excuses being bandied around as to why they would not achieve those times or beat X Y or Z. I kept quiet. You already know my excuses!

For those of you not familiar with the Parkrun it is a 5k route around the front field of the park made up of approx 2.75 laps so the start and finish are in different places. Making my way up to the start Sean saddled me with the Good or Bad news question but both had the same answer-I was going off first. Better get a move on then as the short jog to the set off position was my only warm up. Having only run the route on a couple of occasions I was concerned about getting lost but I was assured by a well wrapped up Mike Pace that if I just followed the track I would be fine. He doesn't know which one is the best navigator in my OMM partnership with Tina Vivian! After a comprehensive briefing from Sean we all knew what we were doing and I lined up in front on the funnel ready for the off. I had a 3 minute lead on the next runner off-how hard could this be?

And I was off. Steady-not too fast. Warm up on the first lap (if I don't get lost) then ease in to a faster pace for the next 2 circuits. Yeah right! Half way around the first lap my lungs are burning my legs are wobbling and I've definitely overcooked it. I don't look back. It would be too humiliating to see someone behind me at this early stage. The park is looking familiar so I relax that I am going the right way and try to concentrate on getting my breath back and look good going past the finish area towards the start line for the second time. Still on my own I pass the runners who amazingly still have yet to get going. The sun is now shining but very low and I am nearly blinded as I round a corner to head towards the back part of the course.



**The Spirit of the Parkrunner
spurring runners on since
2011**



Are those footsteps? I am passed by the speedier runners setting off on their first laps. They must have been thinking that they would see my back again as they rounded the corner for the final sprint into the finish. Again down towards the finish area and past the "Running Man" who I'm sure gave me an encouraging nod.

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

Starting the 3rd lap I am now into a rhythm and the seeds of possible success are slowly beginning to poke through. I may actually do this. Another opportunity to look over my shoulder but I resist. If there was somebody there I would surely give up. Can I hear footsteps and heavy breathing-Yes-yours you silly mare. There's nobody there. Get a move on.



Only half a lap to go and you're home and dry. Good job too as a huge black cloud is hovering above me threatening to dump its load-and that is not a metaphor for my mood. I'm puffing and panting and occasionally grunting out loud now, Ted Rockliffe would be proud of me as he has the record I'm sure for the loudest grunts emitted during the closing stages of a race.

Around one of the last bends and yes I can hear another runner coming. With about 200m to go I am passed by a friendly guy who encourages me it's not far to go. Did I look bad enough to need the very welcome words? I don't mind admitting I was gutted at being passed so close to home but Hey! 2nd would be good. Rounding the last bend I could see the finish line and the time keepers. A shout went up from Fiona Price. "Well done Denise but quick they are behind you!" Oh Heck I haven't got anything left in my legs even for a welcome downhill finish!

All out now-it's not pretty. I really don't want to lose my place. I cross the line in 2nd place. Gasping for breath I look for the guy who had pipped me to congratulate him. He is nowhere to be seen. Fiona tells me-"You did it you won" No-I was 2nd. I was passed by someone in an orange shirt. *Haha* he had another lap to do and there is nobody behind me! Thanks Fiona I can barely breathe now!



Denise' news transcends a generation

A first, I got a first-it's almost like an "Ology". Only those of a certain age will get that joke. I have been overall winner at the Tom Roberts Handicap once (many moons ago) and been first lady in the same event the following year but apart from that I have always been the Bridesmaid. I can't begin to tell you how good I felt at being first, even in a little ole closed event like this. And 2mins 03secs off my handicap time. The training must be working. A hearty hale once I got my breath back for all the runners coming into the finish many of whom also had P.B's.

Then off course there is the presentation. I tried to remain cool and modest cheering and clapping for the 3rd then 2nd prize winners. But-when you don't win very often-you have to lap it up don't you? A grin and a wave and I was given a water bottle and a great little packaway rucksack (half price in Argos I gather). Greats thanks must go to all those who organised a super little event and you never know I may have to go back next year to retain my title. But of course I don't do 5k's and I don't do fast!

Denise Ellis

Avon Valley Relay



Saturday 6th July will see the fourth running of our Avon Valley Relay held over 18-miles between Christie Miller Sports Centre in Melksham and Bradford on Avon Rugby Club in Winsley. Last year we were joined by teams from Clevedon AC, Swindon Harriers, Tewkesbury AC, Slinn Allstars, Frome Running Club and the Hot Chilli Triathlon team, yet we managed to take victory in all categories.



Our event which takes place one week after the Cotswold Way Relay, is of the more traditional pass-the-baton type of relay with four stages ranging in distance from 4-miles to 5.75-miles and with the exception of the final leg are flat as the route follows the towpath of the Kennet & Avon canal for the most part, which also means that navigation is a bit easier too. The handover points have also been carefully chosen and are located at the Somerset Arms in Semington (Leg-1/2); The Tithe Barn in Bradford on Avon (Leg2/3); Dundas Aqueduct (Leg 3/4).

Entry into the Relay is free to teams from Avon Valley Runners, so please check out the event website at <http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/index.php?page=avon-valley-relay> for more details.

Darren Wrintmore – Vice President



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

Ken, get thee sen down to Weston

As part of our “run for nowt scheme” **Ken Marshall** will be entering the Weston-Super-Mare Half Marathon courtesy of Avon Valley Runners, here is Ken’s motivation for wishing to enter the Grand Pier event to be held later in the year.

For me to write an article about my ‘running career’ seems pretty egotistic; as if I’m some kind of top athlete. I know my running times are mediocre compared to many at the club and even more so in the wider running community and I’ve often compared myself to “a little fat man trying to lose weight”. However, I guess it’s all about personal achievement and being able to do something that I had neither the desire nor the ability to do not many years ago.



I ran my first half marathon in Bath, 2008 at the age of 54 because a young friend of the family had to drop out due to lethargy. In the previous twenty years I hadn’t run a race over more than three miles so I found the two months training prior to the event a very different and difficult experience. I remember phoning Darren for training advice who wisely suggested “go for distance rather than speed.”

I anticipated a time of around two hours but once the race was underway it was clear I was going much faster than that, finishing in a time of 1:44:39. The last mile was absolutely gruelling and my legs felt like lead. My wife Heather, son Tom and daughter Bethan had come to support me and after the race I took about half an hour to join up with them at Garfunkel’s because I could barely put one foot in front of the other. However, I found the experience addictive and booked a slot for the following year as soon as entries were invited.

I’ve since run it every year and my times have gradually reduced down to my PB this year of 1:34:26. Five years ago I never imagined I would be able to do that.

In September I reach the next age category MV60; and with a number of targets in mind I’ve booked a place in the Weston-Super-Mare Half Marathon a couple of weeks later. I shall be using the summer months, peppered with a few races, to train for that event and hope that I can shed a few pounds in the process.

Here are the targets I’m aiming for in that race. The first three are possible, the fourth is a dream and the last two I’ve plucked out of the air.

1. 1:39:39 Good-for-age place (and free entry) at Bath
2. 1:38:45 Ask Bernie Hobbs
3. 1:34:25 Another PB
4. 1:31:41 Sub 7 minute mile
5. 1:29:59 Obvious.
6. 1:29:47 First WAVA percentage above 80%

Over recent years I’ve been inspired by some of our V60 running colleagues like Rosemary Barber, Bernie Hobbs and Frank Lamerton; and would consider it a huge privilege to see my name alongside theirs. Becoming a “little slim man” wouldn’t go amiss either.

Nice words Ken, to claim your prize please contact the club secretary via secretary@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk and a cheque will be winging its way to you.

Wiltshire Track & Field Championships

Saturday 25th May at Tidworth Oval and AVR were mixing it with the counties track clubs - Team Bath, Swindon Harriers and City of Salisbury. We did rather well Fiona Price being crowned Ladies 3000m Champion and Peter Jefferies Triple Jump Champion!!!

Silver medals also went to Mike Towler who also achieved a personal best time of 4:07 in the 1500m and 14-year old Holly Newman in the GU17 200m. Good day had by all.



The following day many were back in action at....



The club responded well to the call to arms and continued our 100% record in the Wiltshire Road Race League and now have a clear ten point lead over our nearest rivals – Chippenham Harriers. The race also saw Ruth Barnes break the clubs long standing 5K record by clocking 17:51 with the former record holder Jackie Rockliffe taking the 1st FV40 prize at the race. Fiona Price and Tina Towler also found themselves in the chocolatey prizes finishing as third lady and 1st FV50 runner respectively. The next WRRL event is the Chippenham 5 on Sunday 9th June.



Darren Wrintmore – Vice President

All Those Years Ago

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

<p>2008: A jaunt along the canal was in order for three Avon Valley Runners on Sunday 8th June as they tackled the Kennet Kanter. Douglas Barber was 2nd Vet and our first runner home in a time of 1:06:49 for this 10 mile multi terrain event. Simon Gilbert was next in 1:13:47 followed by Richard Newman in 1:41:22.</p> <p>A tree trot was the preference for the ladies on Monday 9th June as Liz Ringham, Kathy Kinsey and Deborah Hancock entered the Westonbirt 10K. Liz claimed the 2nd FV35 prize in a time of 41:45, Kathy ran 50:31 and Deborah completed the race in 1:04:59.</p>	<p>2003: Tina Vivian thought she'd have a trip to see the lights when she entered the Blackpool Half Marathon, unfortunately as it was June they weren't on.... Unfazed by this set back she ran the 13.1 mile road course in a time of 1:42:52. Likely post race celebrations may have included some Blackpool rock and a go on the <i>Big One!</i></p> <p>Tom Simpson exclaimed "<i>I'm in Essex Girl!</i>" as he crossed the border to contest the Horndon-on-the-Hill 10K on Sunday 29th June. He crossed the line in 48:41 at this road based race which is part of the village Feast & Fayre festival.</p>
<p>1998: The combined efforts of Alistair Bartlett, Gerry Fice and Kevin Sparey brought the men's team prize home to the valley at the Warminster Forest 10 race on Sunday 28th June. They each also claimed individual prizes of 3rd Man, 2nd and 3rd Vet respectively with times ranging from 1:00:32 to 1:03:52.</p>	<p>1988: There was a nautical theme to the race partaken by Dave Bristow and Tony Frost as they ran the HMS Royal Arthur Half Marathon on Sunday 4th June. Dave claimed 9th place overall in a time of 1:24:35 and Tony was 25th in 1:32:35.</p>

History of Running

Being one of our older runners, *Off Road Secretary Anthony Hickson* is very well placed to know a thing or two about the history of running and below he recounts some of the pivotal moments of our chosen recreation.

Running probably started as the ancestors of mankind ran to hunt animals, but competitive running grew out of religious festivals as in Greece, Egypt and Asia. The earliest recorded competitive running dates back to the funeral games, the Tailteann Games in Ireland in 1829 BC.

Marathon running is reputed to have been started as a result of the Greek soldier, Pheidippides, a messenger running from the Battle of Marathon to Athens where he collapsed and died.

Cross Country running began in England in the early 1800's in the Public Schools. Shrewsbury started cross country running in about 1833 but the headmaster tried to stop it. "Not a Gentlemanly thing to do". However he was unsuccessful and running started to thrive.

The Captain was called the 'Huntsman' who would lay a paper trail and the 'Gentlemen of the Runs' would pursue this trail. In 1837 Rugby School ran an event called the 'Crick Run'.

(Crick is a village near Rugby).

The first Cross Country Running Club to be formed was in 1867. This was (and is still) called Thames Hare and Hounds. Runners called Hares would lay a paper trail and the Hounds would follow this. The first to catch the Hares would be the victor. They used to meet in a pub called the Kings Head where they bathed in 'Hip Tubs', however due to a fire in the dressing rooms, where most of the hip tubs were destroyed, they had to find new accommodation in Wimbledon.

The world's most northern marathon is the North Pole marathon where the temperature is minus 30C. The most southerly certified marathon is the Stanley Marathon in the Falkland Islands which has been run annually since 2005. In 2006 the winning time was 3:04:16. However on November 20th, 2013, the ninth Antarctic Ice Marathon will take place at 80 Degrees South, just a few hundred miles from the South Pole at the foot of the Ellsworth Mountains.