



Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS
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Wiltshire Road Race League Review

The Salisbury Half Marathon on October 20th marked the end of the 2013 season of the Wiltshire Road Race League which started back in February at the **Longleat 10K** where Ewen Malloch of Team Bath just edged out Michael Tolwer of Avon Valley Runners to cross the finish line first, however with Ruth Barnes of Avon Valley Runners crossing the line first for the Ladies it was the Trowbridge based club that took maximum League points ahead of Team Bath and Slinn Allstars.



Race #2 took place at the **Devizes 10K** and saw Simon Plummer of Salisbury A&RC take victory just ahead of Simon Nott of

Calne Running Club, with Denise Grech of Calne SMaRTT the first lady, again though it was Avon Valley Runners who took maximum points. With Simon Plummer only appearing again to take victory at the **Highworth 5** it became very much a duel between Simon Nott, Ewen Malloch and Michael Towler for individual honours. Fiona Price of Avon Valley Runners also started to feature in the results taking victories at the **Chippenham 5** and **Springfield 5K**. August saw the **DB Max Wiltshire 10K** at Castle Combe and Simon Nott ran a storming 32:35 to claim his first county title with Ruth Barnes retaining her 2012 title for the distance. Meanwhile the steady scoring of Jill Westwood of Avon Valley Runners had propelled her to the position of leading individual scorer in the League, demonstrating that consistency is the key to League success. Avon Valley Runners were demonstrating both consistency and superiority in numbers and results as they continued to take maximum points in all League races and by Race #10 at the **Melksham 10K** secured their successful defence of the League title.



The **Malmesbury Half Marathon** played host to race #11 and Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds bucked the trend of Avon Valley Runners victories and Chippenham Harriers also got in on the act to bag more points than their close rivals. The **Malmesbury Half Marathon** also saw Corsham Running Club's Stuart Henderson take his first victory over the distance and moved him to third position in the individual standings behind the Avon Valley Runners pair of Joby Hobbs and Thomas Coney.

For the first time the Wiltshire Road Race League sported a Second Division and despite the best efforts of Simon Nott, saw Devizes Running Club secure enough points to become division champions and gain promotion along with Frome Running Club who entered the League for the first time in 2013. Heading down to the Second Division though for 2014 are Team Bath 'B' and Salisbury A&RC 'A'.

The final event of the season was the **Salisbury Half Marathon** which also hosted the county championships for the distance, this event saw Michael Towler take the county title along with club mate Ruth Barnes as Avon Valley Runners finished the season with another 20-point victory and Stuart Henderson doing enough to finish as the leading individual scorer along with Jill Westwood.

So the tables as they finished for the 2013 Wiltshire Road Race League:

FIRST DIVISION				SECOND DIVISION			
Pos.	Team	Score	Pts	Pos	Team	Score	Pts
1	Avon Valley Runners - A	10928	200	1	Devizes Running Club - A	6846	199
2	Chippenham Harriers - A	9087	186	2	Frome Running Club - A	4079	189
3	Avon Valley Runners - B	7085	177	3	Calne Running Club - A	1423	141
4	Corsham Running Club - A	4210	149	4	Wootton Bassett Hounds - B	1542	58
5	Team Bath AC - A	3368	144	5	Slinn Allstars - B	1157	55
6	Swindon Harriers - A	2541	142	6	Pewsey Vale Running Club - A	508	37
7	Slinn Allstars - A	3623	141	7	Frome Running Club - B	158	34
8	Calne SMaRTT - A	3040	131	8	Swindon Striders - B	308	33
9	Chippenham Harriers - B	3012	124	9	Corsham Running Club - B	216	18
10	Wootton Bassett Hounds - A	3391	98	10	Salisbury A&RC - B	71	18
11	Swindon Striders - A	1751	79	11	Marlborough Running Club - A	139	17
12	Highworth Running Club - A	1414	74	12	Calne SMaRTT - B	33	17
13	Salisbury A&RC - A	1362	63	13	Swindon Harriers - B	60	15
14	Team Bath AC - B	77	10	14	Highworth Running Club - B	52	14

The top individual scorers in the Wiltshire Race League were also recognised:

Name	Club	TOTAL	Name	Club	TOTAL		
1	Stuart Henderson	Corsham Running Club	969	1	Jill Westwood*	Avon Valley Runners	952
2	Joby Hobbs	Avon Valley Runners	945	2	Tina Towler*	Avon Valley Runners	887
3	Thomas Coney	Avon Valley Runners	901	3	Rosemary Barber*	Avon Valley Runners	835
4	Michael Towler	Avon Valley Runners	888	4	Fiona Price	Avon Valley Runners	792
5	Gary Dunstone*	Chippenham Harriers	871	5	Kate Ellis	Devizes Running Club	768
6	Richard Morgetroyd	Avon Valley Runners	864	6	Caroline Palmer	Devizes Running Club	656
7	Damion Godwin	Devizes Running Club	817	7	Tracy Gregory	Devizes Running Club	577
8	Simon Nott	Calne Running Club	798	8	Adele Cooper	Avon Valley Runners	519
9	Darren Wrintmore	Avon Valley Runners	761	9	Ruth Barnes	Avon Valley Runners	500
10	Martin Bridgeman	Swindon Harriers	747	10	Carolyn Maw	Devizes Running Club	476
14	Richard Southgate*	Avon Valley Runners	635				
15	Bernie Hobbs*	Avon Valley Runners	603				

* Age Category Winners

The 2014 Wiltshire Road Race League will again be sponsored by Newsquest International whose publications include the Wiltshire Times, Salisbury Journal, Swindon Advertiser and Devizes Gazette & Herald. The 2014 Wiltshire Road Race League will kick off on Sunday 9th February with the **Longleat 10K**. More details of the Wiltshire Road Race League can be found at www.wiltshire-athletics.org.uk

Darren Wrintmore – Chairman, Wiltshire Athletic Association

Wiltshire Cross Country Championship

This year the Wiltshire XC Championship is being hosted by the Gwent XC League at Bath University on Sunday 8th December.

Entries for Wiltshire (and Somerset) eligible athletes should be made through <http://www.entrycentral.com/XC2013> before 5th December and entries will be accepted on the day for Wiltshire athletes subject to a £3.00 levy.

Numbers will be available from the Wiltshire Athletic Association tent and must be collected not less than 30-minutes before the start of a race and finishers tokens which will be presented by Gwent XC League officials on crossing the finish line, must be handed back in to the county tent not more than 15-minutes after the completing the race. Wiltshire Athletic Association shall endeavour to identify and award medals to leading athletes on the day, however full results will not be available until released by the Gwent XC League.

Please note that ONLY ATHLETES ENTERING THE EVENT THROUGH THE WILTSHIRE XC CHAMPIONSHIPS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR COUNTY SELECTION AND/OR INDIVIDUAL/TEAM RECOGNITION.

To help the Wiltshire XC Championships to operate smoothly within the Gwent XC League on Sunday 8th December any offers of assistance would be greatly appreciated. Please contact XC@wiltshire-athletics.org.uk for more details.

Darren Wrintmore – Chairman Wiltshire Athletic Association

Historic Move

From the 1st December 2013 all Avon Valley Runners training sessions that have previously been run from Melksham and Trowbridge will relocate to the new Trowbridge Rugby club facility at Paxcroft between Hilperton and Semington, known as Doric Park.

Training sessions at the new location will commence at 19:00 on both Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

To coincide with this historic move, several members have been busy compiling a list detailing past presidents, chairmen, secretaries, treasurers and club captains; detailed below is the 'Roll of Honour'.

Year	President	Chairman	Secretary	Assistant Secretary	Treasurer
1986	Mike Holland	Paul Morgan	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1987	Mike Holland	Paul Morgan	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1988	Mike Holland	Tom Roberts	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1989	Mike Holland	Tom Roberts	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1990	Mike Holland	Denise Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1991	Mike Holland	Denise Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1992	Mike Holland	Ted Rockcliffe	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Miles Holland
1993	Mike Holland	Ted Rockcliffe	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	George Henderson
1994	Mike Holland	Ted Rockcliffe	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	George Henderson
1995	Mike Holland	Ted Rockcliffe	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	George Henderson
1996	Mike Holland	Colin Williamson	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Dennis Mellor
1997	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Dennis Mellor
1998	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Dennis Mellor
1999	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Dennis Mellor
2000	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Dennis Mellor
2001	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Les Unsworth

Year	President	Chairman	Secretary	Assistant Secretary	Treasurer
2002	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Les Unsworth
2003	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Les Unsworth
2004	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Les Unsworth
2005	Mike Holland	Bob Ellis/Ted Rockliffe	Stan Farr	Judy Farr	Joyce Field
2006	Mike Holland	Ted Rockliffe	Stan Farr/Julia Drewitt	Judy Farr	Joyce Field
2007	Mike Holland	Ted Rockliffe	Darren Wrintmore	Julia Drewitt	Joyce Field
2008	Mike Holland	Ted Rockliffe	Darren Wrintmore	Julia Drewitt	Joyce Field
2009	Mike Holland	Chris Atkinson/Denise Ellis	Darren Wrintmore	Tina Giles	Joyce Field
2010	Mike Holland	Andrew Hoddinott	Darren Wrintmore	Sarah Jewers	Joyce Field
2011	Mike Holland	Andrew Hoddinott	Darren Wrintmore	Sarah Jewers	Liz Gard
2012	Ted Rockliffe	Andrew Hoddinott	Fiona Price	Sean Price	Liz Gard
2013	Ted Rockliffe	Andrew Hoddinott	Fiona Price	Sean Price	James Crawford

History of Avon Valley Runners Captains/Race Secretaries

Year	Club Captain
1986 - 1991	Tim Northwood

Year	Men's Captain	Vice-Captain	Women's Captain	Vice-Captain
1992 - 1993	Bob Ellis	Colin Williamson	Judy Farr	Rosemary Barber
1994	Bob Ellis	Andy Robertson	Judy Farr	Rosemary Barber
1995	Bob Ellis	Andy Robertson	(remainder unrecorded)	
1996	Bob Ellis	Andy Robertson	Joyce Field	Judy Farr
1997	Colin Williamson/Glenn Johnson	N/A	Joyce Field	Denise Ellis
1998 - 1999	Simon Spedding	Ted Rockliffe	Joyce Field	Denise Ellis
2000 - 2001	Ted Rockliffe	Les Unsworth	Joyce Field	Denise Ellis
2002	Les Unsworth	Ted Rockliffe	Joyce Field	Denise Ellis
2003	Les Unsworth	Ted Rockliffe	Susie Phillips	Joyce Field
2004	Darren Wrintmore	Les Unsworth	Susie Phillips	Joyce Field
2005	Darren Wrintmore	Ted Rockliffe	Tina Vivian	Joyce Field
2006	Darren Wrintmore	Stuart MacGregor	Tina Vivian	Denise Ellis
2007	Chris Atkinson	Stuart MacGregor	Tina Vivian	Denise Ellis
2008	Carl Davies	Simon Gilbert	Julia Drewitt	Sue Cook
2009	Will Whitmore	Andrew Hoddinott	Kathy Kinsey	Kay Middleton
2010	Carl Davies	Chris Atkinson	Kathy Kinsey	Kay Middleton
2011	Carl Davies	Richard Morgetroyd	Ali Atkinson	Kay Middleton

Year	Road Secretary	Off-Road Secretary
2012 - 2013	Warren Wade	Anthony Hickson

Silver Jubilee Founder Members 1986-2011
Bob Ellis, Judy Farr, David Gosling, Mike Hehir, Bernie Hobbs, Tim Northwood, Ted Rockliffe, Bob Washbourne, Ron Whittle, Ray Withey

Honorary Life Members
1997 Stan Farr, Judy Farr
2007 Tony Bartlett
2011 Tony Griffith

Honorary Life Members
2012 Gordon Russell, Darren Wrintmore
2013 Alistair Bartlett, Rosemary Barber, Denise Ellis, Alan Hayes, Michael Towler

All Those Years Ago

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

<p>2008: Kevin Sparey, Vojtech Hadju and Alistair Bartlett not only went home with a commemorative Pudding following the Bromham 10K on Sunday 7th December but they also claimed the 1st Men's Team prize; furthermore Kevin was 1st MV50.</p> <p>The 1st Ladies Team prize also came back to the valley after great performances from Liz Ringham, Rachel Bown and Tina Giles.</p>	<p>2003: Danny Kay headed to the Balearics for some winter sun and while he was there contested the Majorca Marathon. He was 2nd MV60 in a time of 3:36:54.</p> <p>Husband and wife team, Bob and Denise Ellis shunned the Spanish sun for some fun at the Methyr Mawr 10K in Wales. Bob ran 44:06 whilst Denise crossed the line in 59:56.</p>
<p>1998: Bored with the usual running races he'd partaken in so far since being a member of Avon Valley Runners, Neil Whitehead chose to do the Duck Pond Waddle 15K on Sunday 13th December. He quacked his way round the multi-terrain course in a time of 1:02:52 and claimed the 3rd MV50 prize.</p>	<p>1988: Darren Wrintmore was hoping to become invested in the order of the secret handshake as he once again participated in one of the Silver Knight series of races, this time the 10 mile race on Sunday 4th December; unfortunately he missed out on the all important top 10 but he did gain himself a PB for the distance in a time of 1:00:15. The 10 mile event was the conclusion of the Silver Knight series; Darren finished 8th overall in the series.</p>

New Newsletter Editor Sworn In

It is with a touch of sadness mixed with a feeling of a huge weight being lifted from my shoulders as I advise all my lovely readers that this will be my last edition as Editor of the Valley News. Sadness as I was disappointed not to have been recognised by the Literary Guild. Relief as the burden of expectation is no more of attempting to ensure each month's edition is of the high quality that the discerning members of Avon Valley Runners have become accustomed to in their newsletter.



However I am pleased to inform you that at a secret ceremony at Valley News Towers last Thursday, Ken Marshall was sworn in as the new newsletter Editor. Following his induction and a celebratory finger buffet of vol au vents and gala pie, Ken was shown to the editing suite and his prize of the well worn faux leather chair along with the globe drinks cabinet were I have often sought solace during moments of writers block. Unfortunately Ken will have to take a trip to *Bottoms Up* for restocking purposes as the remainder of the *Advocaat* left by my predecessor, had in a moment of desperation, been drained.



I'm sure Ken will do a fantastic job and I hope you will support him with many and varied contributions. Thanks for all the support and the positive feedback you have given me during the past couple of years whilst I have been Editor, it's been fun, I think!

The following article is a little taster of what Ken has in store for future editions, so when you've got through 38 Shades of Grey and you can't be bothered with the other 12, 'cause you know the predictability of the outcome, settle down with a glass of egg nog and read Ken's piece instead...

Richard Morgetroyd

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

The Indian Takeaway

Marjorie Danvers placed her bag of honey-coated cashew nuts on the arm of her chair and reached for the TV remote. She was tired of endless cookery programs telling her how to marinade lean chicken breasts or trying to convince her that brussel sprouts would taste good mixed with flaked almonds and balsamic vinegar. She was looking forward to the Indian takeaway her husband and best friend John would bring her when he came home from work. It was a treat she looked forward to on a Friday, John's payday; although these days the Friday night takeaway seemed to crop up with alarming regularity during the week.

She pressed the TV remote and stopped at a news channel on which a slim, middle-aged woman was being interviewed. Marjorie heard how the woman and her husband had been dangerously overweight causing her husband's premature death from a heart attack at the age of forty two. The now slim, middle-aged woman had decided to alter her lifestyle and campaign for healthier living. She was running a marathon for charity; the Heart Foundation; and she looked good and ready in her track suit and trainers; a theatrical trick, thought Marjorie, deliberately intended to portray her new outlook on life.

After listening for a minute or two Marjorie looked at her wedding photograph on the TV; a photograph taken only ten years ago that seemed like something from a bygone era. She knew the two people in the photograph had existed once and she knew she used to be one of them, but the comparison between then and now was stark and too uncomfortable for rational thought. The day itself seemed like only yesterday and yet she was aware her waistline had expanded proportionally with the passing of time.

Marjorie decided it would be prudent to move the photograph somewhere less prominent; where her conscience would not be so seared from looking at it. She had had thoughts like this before and had chosen not to allow herself to indulge in flights of fancy in which she was slim again. She flipped the channel, resting upon something more comfortable and less of a contrast to the feast in which she was about to indulge. Then she sat back in her armchair trying to shake off the mental effects of the interview with that woman in that tracksuit, smugly looking forward to punishing her body over that unbearably long distance.

John came home just before 9pm, like a hunter returning from a conquest. The ample bulk of his prey under one arm prevented him from holding his bicycle and manipulating his door key at the same time, so using his elbow he rapped on the front door causing Marjorie to rise from her armchair and head down the hall. The smell of the Indian dishes seemed to hit her long before she reached the door, breathless from her effort, but she wondered if that was anticipation rather than reality.

After demolishing the contents consisting of aloo sag, Bombay potatoes, lamb bhuna, chicken teriyaki and a vegetable biriani plus all the side dishes that were necessary for such a feast, they sat back and fell asleep watching an episode of Gavin and Stacey. They both snored loudly, drowning out the noise of the TV that no-one was watching. Without ever knowing how it happened they made the mystical transition from armchair to bed where they slept soundly for the rest of the night until they were disturbed by their eight year old son Jake pushing open the bedroom door.

The sight that met Marjorie's eyes as she came downstairs with Jake filled her with disgust. The smell emitting from the empty cartons had somehow lost its appeal and had become nothing more than a testimony to her state of health and a reminder of the lack of care she now took of herself. She looked at Jake and tried to remember if she had ever run with him in the park or rolled around with him in the garden. *That*, she thought, *had never happened* and probably never would unless she made the effort to change. That woman in the tracksuit flashed into her mind as her thoughts drifted towards John tearfully appealing to the public on air, because his young children had lost their mother prematurely to heart disease. "John. I want to lose weight." She confessed over her morning coffee. Whether through over-eating the night before, or as a salve to a now tender conscience, she could not face food this morning. "What's brought this on now?" John replied, unable to hide a sense of sarcasm in his reply.

"I'm fed up with being fed up." She continued, the irony unintended. "I looked at Jake this morning and I felt disgusted with myself. I want to do something about it, John. I want to feel different. I want to *be* different. It's not fair on Jake and Becca. They deserve a better mother than they've got."

There was no time to talk now with John's shift beginning in less than an hour but he promised he would talk to her when he came home. "No takeaway this evening, John. I'll cook something." *Maybe I'll try marinating some lean chicken* she thought to herself. John smiled as he kissed her. He was ever a realist and wondered how long this resolve would last. "I'll love you no matter what you look like, ok. It's *you* I love, not what you look like. When I first met you I fancied you like mad. But now...." "But now you don't." She interrupted.

"Let me finish will you!" He insisted. "...but now it's nothing to do with fancying you. You're part of me. We're going to be old one day. Fancying becomes irrelevant then. You'll still be *you*."

"No. What you *should* say is you won't fancy me unless I lose some of this disgusting stuff off my middle." She argued. "I can't say that, because it's not true. But if you want to do that I'll support you all the way."

Pushing his bicycle onto the pavement, John left for the day to carry out another shift in the local fire brigade. He loved his job and its physical nature kept him lean and strong. He reflected on the conversation he had just had with Marjorie. There was no doubt in his mind that he would enjoy her looking slim and attractive again, even though he had never allowed himself to indulge in those thoughts as her waistline had slowly and surreptitiously expanded over the years of their married life. He had never wanted to confront her over it and he was determined to treat her the same as he always had, come what may, for better or for worse; but if that resolve came from her, he would welcome and encourage it.

Marjorie took Jake and Becca to the park where she usually sat on the bench eating a packet of crisps while they played. Today she wanted to play *with* them. Being children, they noticed the difference but were unable to articulate it. All they knew was that their mother was pushing them on the swings and trying awkwardly to jump on and off the roundabout, trying in vain to carry out their instruction to *make it go faster*.

After five minutes she sat down heavily on the park bench, breathless but satisfied that her resolve was underway. It was such a small step and so insignificant, but it *was* a step in the right direction.

When she got home her enthusiasm took her to her laptop where she *googled* for local races. There was nothing like an incentive to satisfy the resolve and if that woman could do it, why couldn't she.

At first she was distracted by the plethora of forthcoming races. She wondered why the ubiquity of such events hadn't caught her attention before, but then she hadn't been looking and she would have ignored them anyway. She found a ten kilometre race taking place not too far away that was described as *flat and fast and good for PBs*. Marjorie didn't know what *PB* meant, so she *googled* that too. It clearly wasn't referring to the chemical symbol for lead, nor to the computer company *Packard Bell*. Adding the word '*race*' to her search, she found the answer to her enquiry and then realised there was no such thing as a *PB* in a life devoid of activity. She grabbed her credit card and before having the temptation to change her mind, she paid her ten quid and entered the race. That was half the amount they could easily have spent on an Indian takeaway. The event was in two months.

Later that afternoon Marjorie spent nearly an hour scouring the contents of her cupboards until she found a pair of trainers gathering dust. She was grateful that her feet had not expanded at the same rate as the rest of her ample frame and with a thin pair of socks they fitted reasonably well. Strangely she felt good.

After John came home that evening Marjorie left him to spend some time with the children. She waited until it was dark and slipped quietly through her side door. With a hood over her head she started to trot down the road but after no more than two minutes she felt sick. Her head was thumping and her lungs felt like they were about to burst.

She stopped; feeling a little disheartened, but determined to carry on. She walked a little way until her lungs started to feel easier again, then she set off; this time for no more than a minute before they started screaming at her to stop. She walked to a significant point about half a mile from the house then turned around to head back. When John greeted her at the door her face was bright red from the effort and perspiration was dripping onto her collar. "I've just done a mile John, up to the monument and back. I had to walk most of it and it was agony and it hurt like hell but I did it and I want to do it again;

Tomorrow and the day after and the day after and I want to go further and I want to go faster until I can run all the way. I've booked myself into a 10k race in two months and I want to do it, no matter what it takes." Her tirade, punctuated by heavy breathing, eventually came to a rest, giving John the opportunity to contribute. "Marj, that's fantastic. Just don't overdo it ok, that's the worst thing you can do. Take it slowly and do it gradually. I'll help you all I can, but you have to be sensible."

Marjorie's breathing recovered enough for her to add "John, I can barely *do* it, let alone *overdo* it; and I can't do it any other way than *slowly* so no danger there."

"What I mean is, be satisfied that you're doing something and be satisfied that you have a resolve. Right now you're excited by the prospect but if you do too much you'll either injure yourself or you'll get fed up. Let's work on a regime; some kind of plan that will give you something to aim at."

Marjorie breathed heavily again and managed to say "Ok, whatever you say."

"I don't have many wise sayings," added John, "but one thing I always say is *doing too little is far better than doing too much.*"

Marjorie went to the Monument and back the next day, and the next – often under the cover of darkness and always hidden under her hoody. As the weeks passed, the distance increased and the walking decreased. Her breathing became easier and her resolve grew. In fact Marjorie started to enjoy her daily run/walk and looked forward to it. She always came back breathless, but she always came back feeling like she'd achieved something. Once or twice when she felt really motivated, she did it twice in a day. She didn't tell John about these secret indulgences but remained satisfied that her progression towards that 10 kilometre race was getting ever more realistic.

Marjorie chose not to weigh herself. She was not concerned about her weight but about how she felt; about what she could do and about how she could enjoy playing with her children. She already felt hugely better than that day she first ran to the monument but there was, she knew, a long way to go. She could barely manage two miles with some walking so ten kilometres seemed a very long way off. *Never mind.* She thought, *At least I'm getting there.*

Three weeks before the race Marjorie deposited Jake and Becca at their respective schools. It was her morning off she had a limited amount of time. After carrying out some domestic duties, she jumped in the car, reset the tachometer and drove down the main street and out of town for just over three miles. She made a mental note of a nearby landmark and found somewhere to turn around and head back home.

After parking the car, she jumped out, threw on her hoody and set off. The attempt to hide her identity was futile to say the least but it kept her blissfully unaware of any neighbours who were watching her. She needed to be at work in two hours so she had to be quick. She managed to run the first mile, having achieved that distance many times recently but was daunted by the thought of a further five to go. The turning point she had marked out might as well have been a hundred miles away. She struggled some more but was unable to sustain any pace. She stopped and walked, constantly looking at her watch. If she carried on at this rate she would never make it back in time. This was her first attempt to run anything like ten kilometres and she felt miserable that she had failed. This morning the prospect had been so exciting but now it had become an ugly reminder of her inability and her foolishness in believing that she could complete that sort of distance. She walked all the way back home, dejected and miserable and ashamed of her failure.

"How'd it go today Marj?" John asked as he came through the door later that evening.

"Not good John; a bit of failure I'm afraid." She replied quietly. "I tried to run six miles and I could barely manage three. I had to turn around way before the three mile mark otherwise I would have been late for work. I'm useless and it was stupid to think I could do this. I'm never going to make it and I want to ask for my money back." "Sorry Marj. You can't." John said, a little abruptly. "What d'you mean, I can't?" She asked, unable to hide her annoyance. He hesitated, and then said "I've started raising money." He looked at Marjorie as if he was a child about to be reprimanded for doing something naughty. "It's for the Heart Foundation. I've got two hundred quid from the guys at work and some of them have already pledged more if you complete the race." "You did what?" She shouted. "Why didn't you tell me? How could you do that without telling me?"

“It was because I believed in you Marj.” John assured her. “No.” He corrected himself. “It’s because I *believe* in you. You *can* do it and you will. Your first mistake was setting yourself an unrealistic target. You had to get back for work so you put yourself under pressure. That’s bound to lead to dejection and failure. Next time you try it there will be nothing to get back for and it won’t matter how long you take. Do it this Saturday when we both have the day off. I’ll take the kids to my mum’s. She’ll love that; and I’ll come with you. It’ll be good for me and I can keep an eye on your progress.” Marjorie was confused. She was convinced she wanted to cry off but in a way she was glad to be denied the opportunity. Secretly she wanted to be made to carry on. It was a mammoth task she knew, but it was a task from which she wanted to emerge triumphant. Without John she would have given up there and then but she knew that was not what she really wanted. She made a vain attempt to protest but John allowed none. He was unmoved. She had started this venture and he was adamant she was going to complete it.

John made her promise that she would not engage in any activity before Saturday. “Remember,” he advised, “rest is as important as exercise; and that’s not one of my wise sayings. You’ll find it in any fitness regime.” The next two days felt slightly odd. Marjorie had always looked forward to doing her mile or two, up to and beyond the monument and back; yet being made to rest was a welcome relief. Surprisingly she looked forward with some impatience to the day when she would be allowed to go again. She realised this was one of John’s clever tricks; to wind her up like an elastic band until she couldn’t wait to be released and spring into action again.

When the day came she felt excited and ready to go. “Slowly, slowly,” warned John. “Take it very easy and let your body build up gradually. That way you won’t knacker yourself before you’ve gone half a mile.” Marjorie wondered why this advice seemed so wise. She had always set off hell for leather as if her life had depended on it. It wasn’t fast by any means, but it was about the fastest she could manage and too soon it turned to aching lungs, aching calves and the need to walk. She had assumed this was how it should always be; that everyone had to go through this discomfort until it became gradually easier. John’s way made it seem much more comfortable. It wasn’t much more than a brisk walk and she knew she could go faster, but she stayed with it. John knew what he was doing and she trusted him.

After just over two miles she was still running, admittedly very slowly but still running. Then John made her stop and rest. “Let’s walk a bit now. That landmark you identified should be less than a mile away so if we walk the rest of the way that’s fine. Then we’ll do exactly the same coming back.”

When they got home John asked Marjorie if she felt any worse coming back than going out. “It felt about the same.” She said. “In the end I was glad to stop, but the effort wasn’t really any greater.”

“And do you realise,” John announced proudly, “that we came back nearly two minutes quicker than going out. See, we built up to it gradually. We accustomed our bodies to the pace and the distance. That’s important Marj, don’t forget it.” Marjorie couldn’t help noticing the use of the word *we*. John was doing his best to stay alongside her, as if this was his resolve too. “The strange thing is” she said, “I’ve just done six miles. I didn’t run all the way and maybe I won’t on the day, but I did it and it felt quite good. When can we do it again?” “Not tomorrow.” said John. “Tomorrow we go for a long walk with the kids and we only run to play; to let them know we’re bigger and stronger than they are; for a few more years anyway.” For Marjorie, this was enough. For the first time in her life she had done six miles, walking and running; something that made her feel very good.

Race day came and after depositing the children with John’s mum, they made their way to the event. Marjorie felt incredibly nervous. She didn’t know why. She wasn’t about to break any records and she wasn’t about to compete for the award of *fastest female*. She was going to be slow and she was going to come in last or near to last, so she had no idea why her nerves were getting to her.

“That’s the adrenalin and the endorphins,” advised John, “mechanisms to prepare your body for the chase. It will make you feel less pain when you run, and it will help you find a strength you didn’t know you had.” Marjorie didn’t believe him. It was the thought of failure and the thought of making a fool of herself. That’s what was making her nervous. It was the idea that people would be looking at her wondering what earthly right she had to be taking up a slot in a race over ten kilometres. A race that was occupied by slim, athletic figures out to impress. People would be laughing inwardly at her; they would be pointing to her and smirking to each other. Children would be asking their mothers who this fat woman was.

The paramedics would be ready to pounce when she collapsed and John would be preparing his speech about his wife who had succumbed to heart disease while trying in vain to exercise away her years of over-indulgence.

Take it easy, take it easy. She told herself as the starting horn went off. She waddled towards the start line while the elite athletes and the club runners sped off into the distance, leaving only the fun runners and the fund-raisers bringing up the rear. After about twenty seconds she reached the mat and heard a ping as the chip secured by her shoelace started the timing process. *Take it easy, take it easy,* she told herself again. Then she heard someone shouting. "Go on Marj, you can do it!" John was on the sidelines waving at her. She looked up, smiled and waved back as she ran past him.

During the race Marjorie managed to find a group of similarly inadequate competitors, both men and women, who all looked like they were there to make up the numbers. It made her feel a little better that she was not the only one who would find this a struggle. Sometimes she went beyond them and sometimes she lagged behind, but generally eight or ten of them stayed together along the entire course. Towards the end of the race she was all in. She had not quite managed to run all the way; some of the longer upward inclines had been just a little too much for her and she had had to walk; but she had never, ever exerted herself to this degree and she had never pushed her body to such lengths. She was slow, she hurt and she knew there were not many runners behind her; but as she turned the last corner and saw the gantry displaying the finish line she felt a buzz of excitement that was different to anything she had ever felt. She desperately wanted to go faster towards the line but her body refused to respond; she felt like she had nothing left. Then she heard something strange. In the distance she could see that a crowd had gathered to the left of the gantry. She heard chanting "Marj, Marj, Marj, Marj" all in unison; like the constant beating of drum; like a war cry urging her on to victory. She looked to the source of the sound and saw John; then she saw Jake and Becca jumping up and down and waving their arms. Where had *they* come from? Then she saw about twenty of John's colleagues; some of them holding a banner which read *Go Marj* and another which read *Marj is running for the heart foundation! They're here for me.* She thought. *They want me to do this; I'm not just doing it for me, I'm doing it for them too.* She pushed as hard as she had ever pushed and found strength deep down inside her that somehow enabled her to speed up. She lifted her head; she thrust her arms forward one after the other, each one like a pendulum swinging to the beat of the drum that was calling her name.

The increase in speed was small and insignificant but the effect was noticeable to all those watching. As she approached the line there was a deafening noise emitting, not just from those who had come to support her but from everyone else watching too. Then over the din of the crowd the loud speaker announced "...and what a great finish from number 397 Marjorie Danvers, running for the Heart Foundation. Well done Marjorie; and not far behind we have number 262..."

She stopped after the line. Her legs felt like jelly. John ran to hold her up and Jake and Becca followed close behind. "Marj, you did it. You were fantastic." He said. Marjorie took a while to get her breath. When she had recovered enough she knelt down to hug Jake and Becca close to her. She looked up at John and said "You know I haven't finished don't you? That was just the start. I want to know what a PB feels like."

Ken Marshall



JAVR News # 6



WILTSHIRE ROAD RELAYS



The third running of the Wiltshire Road Relays organised by Wiltshire Athletics Association was greeted with a glorious sunny day. Thirty two teams in total signed up to the event with seven junior teams taking part. The junior teams relay consisted of three legs of 3K and a fiercely contested event ensued. Finn Ross of Avon Valley Runners recorded the fastest leg of the day with a very impressive ten minutes and twelve seconds however in the end it was Corsham Running Club who claimed victory. Avon Valley Runners fielded five teams in the event and finishing in second place overall was Will Crudginton, Cameron McBarnett, and Guy Whelon in a time of 35 minutes and 9 seconds. Avon Valley Runner's third place team consisting of Finn Ross, Ollie Weedon, and Holly Newman finished in a time of 36 minutes and 31 seconds. Next home in a time of 40 minutes and 24 seconds was Cameron Price, Alex Tucker, and Niall Thorne. The fourth Avon Valley team to finish (5th overall team) was Josh Whitefield-Lott, Harrison Trevor, and Kieran Beardsmore, and then in sixth place overall was Vanessa Curtin, Ellie Isaacs, and Callum Fellows in a time of 43 minutes and 41 seconds. A fantastic turnout from Avon Valley Juniors and great performances all round. Well done to all!

For more information visit: www.wiltshire-athletics.org.uk

WILTSHIRE CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Wiltshire Cross Country Championships take place on Sunday 8th December at the University of Bath. Entries are accepted on the day (pre entry is £4.00 / on the day entry £7.00). Race timings are detailed below but for more information about the event go to: <http://www.wiltshire-athletics.org.uk/>

11.30am - Novice Boys - 1.9km
11.35am - Novice Girls - 1.9km
11.40am - Under 13 Boys - 2.8km
11.55am - Under 13 Girls - 2.8km
12.10pm - Under 15 Boys - 3.9km
12.25pm - Under 15 Girls - 3.9km

JAVR CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE 2013

A fifth straight personal best time for Andrew Tipple saw him retain his position at the top of the JAVR league after five races. 55 boys have now participated in the league with the leading five having competed in every league race. With just two races to go it looks like Andrew Tipple, Robert Warner, Kai McGarry, Harry Cade, and Scott Pickford will contest the top three positions. In the girl's league 39 juniors have now taken part with Ellie Isaacs and Jorja Warner having run all five races. The top four positions are only separated by four points so as with the boys league an exciting finish to the league is anticipated.

Details of the league can be found in the junior section of the Avon Valley Runners website.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVERY SATURDAY: Southwick Country Park Run 5km, Southwick (9.00am)
8th December: Wiltshire Cross Country Championships, Uni of Bath (various times)
26th December: The Stan Farr Boxing Day 5km, Trowbridge (11.30am)
9th February: The Longleat 2M, Longleat, Warminster (10.05am)

RESULTS - Send your latest results to: my_avr@yahoo.com for inclusion in JAVR News