



# The Harrier

October  
2003

The newsletter of the Canterbury Harriers

## Ladies win team prizes

The ladies have surpassed themselves in the last few weeks, winning – amongst other awards - the team prize at the Quicksand 15, Boughton 10k and Thanet 10. We also got first, second and third place in the Wingham 10k. Well done to the Quicksand team (**Sarah Maguire** – 2<sup>nd</sup> female; **Jenni Van Deelen** – 4<sup>th</sup>; **Mandy Poulter** – 7<sup>th</sup>), the Thanet 10k team (the same three); the Wingham 10k team (**Sarah May** -1<sup>st</sup> lady; Sarah Maguire – 2<sup>nd</sup>; **Rosie McDermott** – 3<sup>rd</sup>) and to **Stephanie Lam** who won the V45 award (on her 45<sup>th</sup> birthday) and the Boughton team (**Julie Ballands**, **Anna Reutersward** and **Wendy Smith**). **Carol Reid** was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 65 Roses Faversham 10k. Congratulations also to **Emma Wilson** for her 4.08 debut in the Thanet Marathon.

\*We have had numerous good results among the men too – including **Roy Palmer** winning the Boughton 10k and **Dave Smith** coming first V45 at the 65 Roses – but, sadly, do not have space here to list them all.

## AGM on 23 October

The AGM will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, 23 October at Rough Common Village Hall. Sandwiches will be laid on afterwards in the Dog & Bear. Come along if you can make it. This is our main opportunity in the year to discuss the direction of the club and the way it uses its funds.

## 'the most hellish race in the UK'

As **Alastair** puts it, Canterbury Harriers 'can safely claim the record for the UK's most hellish race' through our Red Lion 10k on August 10 this year. As reported in the last issue of the Harrier, we were reasonably sure that we had staged the UK's hottest road race ever when temperatures of 38.1C were recorded in Gravesend on the day of the race. But some Met Office records are only read once a month. And when these results were all collected in September, it emerged that Brogdale – just four miles from the Red Lion – was even hotter at 38.5C (or 101.3). This was the hottest temperature ever recorded in the UK. (You may ask 'Do we really want to be known for our hellish races?' Maybe these days you've just got to grab any accolade you can.)

## Cross-country league starts now

Canterbury Harriers has a strong chance of a good result in the Kent Fitness League XC series, starting on 19 October at Knole Park, Sevenoaks. We need as many people as possible to participate – at least 10 each race. 'Canterbury Harriers stand a good chance of winning the women's shield,' says organiser **Steve Clarke**. We meet at King's School Recreation Centre in time to get to each race – usually at about 9am. The only exception is the event we host, at Blean Woods on 30 November, where we meet there. Please volunteer to marshal if you are free then. £2 entry fees for each XC are met by the club. 'I'm really looking forward to cross country,' said **Marco Keir**. 'I've never done one of them before.' See page 2 for list of events.

## Noticeboard

Asics 2080 Mens (don't ask me why I have mens shoes!) Trainers. Size 7. As new. I paid £67.50 for them (due to our club discount!). Any offers? Telephone 713905 or see me at club training sessions.

**Mandy Poulter.**

## League tables

Harriers ran the distance between Canterbury and New York in road races this year – about 5,600k. (Idea for new relay race, perhaps, with Steve Clarke ferrying people about in a boat.) Details of the league table results – produced by our results maestro Alastair Telford – enclosed.

## canterburyharriers.org

Yet more features have been added to our website by Alastair. A news section is highlighted on the home page. And a minisight – <http://kfl.canterburyharriers.org> – has been set up to record fixtures and results in the Kent Fitness League.

## Baby Harriers

**Richard Steer** and partner Pepukai are the proud parents of a baby girl, Alannah, born on 5 September weighing 4 lbs. **Roy Palmer** and Jenny now have a little boy, Benjamin, who arrived, weighing 7 lbs 6 ounces at the start of October.

FORTHCOMING RACES				
October	19	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 1	Knole Park, Sevenoaks
	26	10.00	Rheims Half	Rheims
	26	11.00	Wilmington 10k	W'ton Grammar, Dartford
November	2	11.00	Deal 5	Walmer Sea Scout Hall
	9	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 2	Swanley Park
	16	11.00	Brighton Reebok 10k	Madeira Drive, Brighton
	23	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 3	Nurstead, Meopham
	23	14.30	Chelmsford 10k	Chelmsford
	30	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 4	Blean Woods, Canterbury
December	7	10.00	Thanet 10	Westgate Bay
	28	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC - 5	Avery Hill Park, New Eltham
January	11	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 6	Minnis Bay
	18	9.30	Dartford 10	Princes Golf & Leisure Club
February	1	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 7	Oxleas Wood, Eltham
	29		Inter-club relay XC	Mote Park

## How it started – by Dave (smiler) Smith

It's 1981, I've just turned thirty two and I'm having a bit of a confidence crisis after a messy divorce. We're between 'sets' and the band is relaxing in a smoky dressing room in Ashford, Kent. The talk gets on to physical fitness and our **keyboard player** boasts that in three months time he's going to run a "big road race" in Thanet. On inquiring about his training regime, he capably admits that he hasn't actually started yet, but next week will mark the beginning of an intensive and rigorous fitness campaign. I enjoyed cross country running at school and am sure that anything the keyboard player can do, I can do better, so I tell him this, to his evident amusement. I think **the level of blood in my alcohol stream** also has something to do with my positive and slightly rash assertion.

**'..the distance is 26.2 m but I can't lose face now'**

The postman drops my race application form for the Thanet Marathon through the letterbox and I notice with horror that the distance is twenty six point two miles, but I can't lose face now. I've got to wipe that smug look of the keyboard player's face at any cost. I begin 'training' immediately, starting with a one mile jog round the block. I also decide to run every day and keep a record of my training to see how (if) I progress. Over the next few weeks I gradually increase the length of my runs until I feel confident that I can accept the challenge to run **five miles** with my father and brother in Romford. Not so confident that I can

leave home without making certain that I've got money for a 'phone call in case I can't make it back. - I make it.

Two and a half months later I decide to run my first race, the 'Roding Half Marathon' in Essex, as a 'warm up' for the big one. I feel both incredibly excited and somewhat apprehensive as I line up at the back of a thousand plus field of runners with my father, whom I hope to run with. Everyone seems to be stretching so I do a bit. Comfortingly it's a two lap course so I can drop out at half way if I have problems.

The gun fires somewhere in the distance and we're off to a gentle downhill start. The first thing I notice is the almost eerie sound of so many running shoes hitting the tarmac. The pace is quite easy and by the time we get to half distance I'm still full of running so inform my father that I'm going to push on a bit. Father doesn't seem impressed. I grow in confidence and seem to feel stronger as the race progresses.

The finishing line time clock shows one hour and thirty one minutes and I'm very happy and relieved not to be in the first aid tent. Someone shakes my hand and informs me that he's been following me all the way round and is impressed with my **pace judgement**. I don't really know what he's talking about but discover for the first time what a **friendly bunch** these runners are. Two weeks later and marathon day has arrived. The longest distance I've run in training so far is fourteen miles. I'm standing at the back of two thousand runners of all shapes and sizes. There's plenty of **nervous chat** and laughter but I'm sure by the look of some of these guys next to me, apparently from the local football team, that not everybody is going to make it all the way. There are even a few people wearing fancy dress. Have I got the right race?

The keyboard player is nowhere to be seen. I feel a little sick and wonder where another friend of mine, Nick Marsh, is. He's promised to give me "a good whipping", though not literally. He probably will.

This time I'm so far back that I don't even hear the gun, I'm just aware that we're all starting to shuffle forwards. Again the pitter patter of not so tiny feet and at last we break into a modest run along **Margate sea front**

At about five miles spectators are shouting out "come on Don". I later discover that this is Don Thompson the Olympic gold medallist - for walking! I feel comfortable as the miles pass and I'm briefly joined at about half way by a runner who has a bunch of keys tucked into his shorts, thus creating a rhythmic but extremely irritating jangle all the time. Thankfully he slows down and fades out.

Some miles later we hit the coastline and begin running downhill into the picturesque Ramsgate harbour. Without warning I feel someone pulling the back of my vest. I look round to discover there's no-one there. I just can't seem to make any headway, suddenly my **legs feel like lead** and I'm a fairly confused about what's happening. Running out of Ramsgate we hit a steep uphill climb. I'm not sure if I'm moving forward, or running on the spot.

**'..A pink fairy overtakes me...'**

At the twenty mile marker some well meaning bystander tells me that there's "not far to go now mate". After some advanced mathematical calculations I realise that there are still more than six miles to the finish. I nearly cry. A pink fairy with a moustache and New Balance shoes overtakes me.

The next few miles become a seemingly endless blur of tarmac and other lost souls on the road to oblivion. My vision has turned to soft focus shades of greys and I worry about getting lost. I take on water but daren't stop in case I can't start again. A cheerful spectator points at me

and says to a friend, **'look at this one'**. I've lost all sense of time and distance and all I can think is I've got to get back to the car.

As I stumble forward I hear a strange, distant sound that reminds me of fights in the school playground. I notice that several people are looking in my direction and clapping. A few more join in. I look up and can hardly believe my eyes. Hundreds of cheering people are lining the road ahead and right at the end is a banner with the word 'finish' on it.

A friend of mine and his wife shout out their congratulations and I manage to wave and raise a smile. Everyone is **cheering and clapping** and I even speed up very slightly. I cross the line and am almost overwhelmed with a variety of feelings; relief, disbelief, elation and an almost uncontrollable urge to giggle, to name but a few. My friend takes a picture of me, that encapsulates the moment, but all I can think is 'I've done it, I've bloody done it'.

The time (three hours and thirty one minutes) seems irrelevant. Nick Marsh's mum and dad look a little worried and he finally shows up looking in a worse state than me, if that's possible. I feel very proud of him as he's not a natural runner and I have some idea how hard he's had to work to finish at all. The keyboard player never materialises and at least owes me **a pint of 'best'**.

Although my head is finally catching up with what my body has been trying to tell it for the last eight miles, I feel so good, that I never want it to end. I can't wipe this **inane grin** from my face and I'm talking utter nonsense to complete strangers.

I've achieved something that no-one can take from me. My self confidence is restored and from now on there's no looking back. Those twenty six point two miles have made a lasting impact.

Who needs keyboard players anyway?

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## Death Valley

by Jenni Van Deelen

With features of the race like Death Valley, The Snake and The Big W, you could be forgiven for thinking that the Jog Shop Jog takes place in the Wild West rather than the gentle green hills of the South Downs in Sussex. Yet, as anyone who has completed the race will testify, those gentle hills are not as easy as they look.

The race covers just over twenty miles, most of this within the quietly beautiful South Downs. There are nearly 700 metres of climbing, divided between several small-to-medium sized climbs. Roughly 90% of the course is off-road,

with several gates and stiles which competitors have to negotiate.

Runners start the race at the Brighton Marina, but are soon heading East towards Telscombe, where the first of the race's five climbs is situated. The North Face is a short but steep track which leaves all but the fittest short of breath.

This first test is soon followed by the gentle uphill of the oddly-named **Yellow Brick Road**, an incongruous strip of light-coloured tarmac in the middle of the Downs. As runners reach the top and approach the halfway point, they are greeted with spectacular views of the South Downs and the landscape around Lewes.

The midway point is also the toughest part of the course, the infamous Big W. Hurling recklessly downhill towards Kingston-Near-Lewes, you are haunted by the fact that you will be forced to make the treacherous descent and the steep path back up not once but twice. Death Valley, a mercifully flat stretch of grassland with hills on every side, brings respite from the climbs but, in mid-August not from the heat.

At this point, runners are faced with the last major difficulty, The Snake, a long, winding trail which returns the race to the uplands. While climbing this slow grind, comfort can be taken in the fact the rest of the race is downhill.

‘..two intrepid Canterbury Harriers..’

On August 24, 2003 two intrepid Canterbury Harriers stood amongst 200 runners at the start line of the Jog Shop Jog, a multi terrain race on the South Downs measuring just over 20 miles. The weather was kind, cloudy and reasonably cool, a blessing given the distance and the testing nature of the course. The only information we had about the race was that given above, taken from the race website, but I knew it was time to start worrying when some of the other runners started talking about walking, rather than running, up the hills and sliding down them. ‘Good job it’s dry’, I heard one man say, ‘it gets really dangerous when it’s wet.’ At this point I did start to wonder if this was a good idea, but as we rarely get the chance to run at the same time (we have two small children) the opportunity to leave them with Grandma in Brighton and race together was too good to miss. At 9am we set off at a steady pace along the cliff tops to Saltdean, where we ran through a residential area before reaching the Downs. These early stages were quite kind, merely undulating, without a trace of the menace to come. The features of the course have all been given names by the race founders, and the first big test came on the ‘North Face’, a long slow haul followed by a steep climb which saw most people slow to a walk. Further undulations followed until we hit the ‘Yellow Brick Road’, a metalled path for walkers, cyclists and lunatics like us; this climbed oh so gradually but for such a long time that my legs started to feel distinctly wobbly. They weren’t helped by the first descent into the ‘Big W’, a downhill-uphill-downhill-uphill section which tested me to my limits. You might think that the downhill sections would give you chance to recover, but in fact the

descents were so steep that my already aching thighs were reduced to jelly at the bottom, so that even running on the flat was a massive effort... and then I had to go up again! By the mid-point of the ‘W’ David was keen to maintain his (faster) tempo so I waved him off and staggered up and down the rest of the W.

‘the cheapest punishment you’ll find..’

I was aware by now that several runners I had passed in the early stages were now running past me, so I concentrated on finding and maintaining a rhythm to keep up my momentum on the only flat section through ‘Death Valley’. Thank goodness it was not too hot! This part of the course incorporated lots of gates and stiles, a test of co-ordination for all those aching muscles. From here we ran up another long, slow climb - the ‘Snake’ - shortly after which we arrived at the 15 mile marsh where mercifully had a tableful of drinks. From here the course reverted to its earlier undulating (by that I mean normal hills rather than something resembling the Alps) nature and wound its way through Ovingdean and around the back of the race course and golf course towards the cliff tops. At this point the Marina, the finishing point, was clearly visible around 2 miles away, but for ages it seemed to stay a distant speck on the horizon. Eventually, of course, I got there, finishing in 3.05, and met up with David who had completed the course in 2.53. So, if you like a challenge, and running up and down hills, you can’t beat this race. It was well organised, the scenery was fantastic and the Jog Shop were selling their goods at wholesale prices on the day! And at £7 it’s the cheapest punishment you’ll find.

### **Canterbury Harriers Committee**

**John Hartley** Chair - 459997  
**Gerry Reilly** Head coach -477148  
**Carol Reid** Treasurer - 379055  
**Stephanie Lam** Secretary - 832213  
**Roy Gooderson** Admin Officer - 454449

Runners Representatives:

**Fayne Brenner** - 732058  
**Steve Clark** - 711272  
**Joe Hicks** - 750797  
**Simon Kendall** - 732058  
**Sue Reilly** - 477148  
**Alastair Telford** - 786210