



The Harrier

March
2003

The newsletter of the Canterbury Harriers

Whitstable 10k – 5 May

We will need up to 30 marshalls for the Whitstable 10k on the May Bank Holiday (11am from the Waterfront Club). This is our major fund-raising event of the year and so subsidises our race fees, Presentation Evening night, pub runs and helps pay for our other activities (from club admin to newsletter to coach training fees). If you – and/or your partner or anyone else – can help out on the day, we would be extremely grateful. Please give your name to **John Hartley** or any other committee member as soon as possible.

London and Paris Marathons

Good luck to all our Marathon entrants this year on 6 (Paris) and 13 (London) April. Injury permitting, the following people are due to run (apologies for anyone missed off):

Paris: **Fayne Brenner, Ed Condry, Iain Smith and Wendy Smith.**

London: **Dianne August, Natalie Bent, Julius Christmas, Joe Epsom, Lisa Feather, Pete Greenwood, Jon Holmans, Adrian Lewis, Sarah McGuire, Tim Perks, Mandy Poulter, Carol Reid, Rob Sargeant, Jan Skeet, Martin Skeet, Richard Steer and Jenni Van Deelin.**

London Marathon coach

The 33-seater will depart from a new Canterbury venue this year – the Iceland car park in Wincheap, where it will leave at 6.30am. There is a pick-up point at Love Lane, Faversham at 6.45 am. (We need to set off this early to beat the traffic to Blackheath.) The coach will drop people off at Blackheath and might or might not be able to proceed soon after to central London. Later on the coach will park near the finish at Bressenden Place, departing at 6pm. People who want to meet up after the

race should go to the tree labelled 'C' on Horse Guards Parade or try the Bag o' Nails pub opposite Bressenden Place where we have met before.

Please could you pay your £10 as soon as possible if you have reserved a seat. There are still a few places left.

Easter

Training will continue as normal over the Easter period. The King's School Recreation Centre will be closed on Good Friday and Easter Sunday – but this obviously will not affect club evenings.

Life after the marathon?

Yes, this will continue – although head coach **Gerry Reilly** says it will be rather different. 'Training is endurance-based in the winter,' he says. 'From April onwards, your focus is speed.' So look forward to more interval training and speed repetitions. When light and weather permit (end April/early May?), we can start using the rugby field on Tuesday nights again and running off road in locations such as Blean Woods, Fordwich and the Westbere Lakes.

Pub runs

We hope to get these going again for the summer from May. We are likely to follow the same pattern as last year – meeting for a run on some Friday nights at 7pm and then having a drink in the chosen pub.

Coolmax Ts and club kit

Coolmax T-shirts are available from **Bob Davidson** and **Roy Gooderson** for £15. Bob and Roy can also make small orders in Canterbury Harriers livery of the stock on show in Hargreaves, Canterbury High Street, for Deal Tri and Invicta.

FORTHCOMING RACES			
Time	Date	Race	Location
10.30	16 March	Hastings Half	West Marina Gdns, St Leonards on Sea
11.00	23 March	Paddock Wood Half	PW industrial estate
8.30	6 April	Darent Valley 10k	Eynsford
	13 April	Marathon	London
11.00	18 April (Friday)	Folkestone 10	Rotunda Amusement Park, Marine Parade
11.00	5 May (Monday)	Whitstable 10k	Waterfront Club, Whits
11.00	11 May	Ashford & District 10k	Sandyacres
11.00	10 August	10k	Red Lion pub, Hernhill

The view from...the coast

The Ballad of Beachy Head by Joe Hicks

When I sent off my entry form in June, running the Beachy Head Marathon seemed like a great idea. I'd heard of the event, previously known as the Seven Sisters Marathon, but all I knew about it was that it was mainly along the South Downs Way, and was limited to 500 runners, 500 joggers, and 500 walkers. It sounded like a great marathon to do as an extra long run.

I received my race number and race information early in October, and immediately noticed that the organisers preferred the term "checkpoint" to "drinks station", and that the first checkpoint was at 8.8 miles. That was a long time to wait for a drink, I thought. So I decided not to read the rest of the instructions in case there was anything else I would rather not know!

Anyway, I was happy that my preparations for the day had gone fine. I had concentrated on longish runs and hills, and just did a few Tuesday speedwork sessions at strides pace. The only setback I had had was an unfortunate reaction to some Polish vodka that I had tried for the first time on the Tuesday before the race, but I had learnt my lesson from that experience and was fully recovered by the weekend.

On Saturday morning I fell out of bed at 6.00 a.m. and drove to Eastbourne before I had time to wake up. The weather forecast was for gale-force winds from the West, but it would be sunny with no rain.

When I arrived I saw that the first few hundred yards of the race were a near-vertical climb up on to the cliff-top, so I ate the banana I'd brought for an after-race snack, then made my way to the start with some of the other participants. There was a real mixture of outfits, ranging from a couple of (probably Taliban) runners wearing just vest and shorts, to walkers covered from head to toe in all-weather gear and carrying trekking poles and rucksacks (probably Americans). I wore tracksters with a long sleeved top and Harriers

vest, but most of the other runners were wearing jackets and many had backpacks. This was definitely going to be different!

Gale force winds on the clifftop

The race started at 9 o'clock sharp, and no one had to worry about going off too fast! But as soon as we reached the cliff-top the gale force winds hit us. We turned to head inland, past Joe the Lone Piper. As he played us out the force of the wind was ripping off race numbers and sending hats flying. The wind was in our faces for about 4 miles, and was so strong in places that everyone was reduced to walking. It was a relief to get to the first – and highest – climb on the route, Willingdon Hill (659 feet), because it gave some shelter from the wind. Until we got to the top! Once again the winds hit us, but in the clear weather the views all around were fantastic. Then the strong wind helped us to keep our balance as we ran down the very steep descent along a dry, but stony and rutted footpath to the first checkpoint. There are no distance markers on the course, so the checkpoints were the only accurate gauge of where we were.

When we got there everyone took their time over food – biscuits and a Mars bar for me – and drinks. By the way, this is a marathon where you can expect to put on weight – on my way round I got through 3 Mars bars, 2 bananas, a sticky bun, and a couple of handfuls of assorted biscuits, although I did refuse a sausage roll!

By now I had chatted to ten people and found that only one of them was, like me, running the event for the first time. The rest were doing it for fifth, seventh or eighth time. Worryingly, nobody seemed to be doing it for the second time!

Soon after leaving Checkpoint 1 we were back at sea level and crossed the River Cuckmere, then passed through Alfriston and ran steadily uphill for 4 miles or so to half-way, passing the second highest climb, Bostal Hill (624 feet). On this section of the Downs, the wind was at its strongest and was really battering us. Again there were several stretches where no one was able to run into it, but, despite the conditions, we passed some people out walking. They must have been barmy!

At Checkpoint 2 we turned left to head back towards the coast, and finally got some respite from wind. Back down to sea level, we crossed

the Cuckmere again then paralleled the river and ran up the 227 steps into Westdean Forest, where Joe the Lone Piper provided more live entertainment. Just a few more miles and we reached the start of the Seven Sisters. It was only running along the Seven Sisters that the wind became a real concern. Climbing up the Sisters with the wind behind was fine, but going down the wind was blowing us off the hillside and that felt pretty unsafe. But the views from along the top of the cliffs were magnificent. It was bright and sunny, and the gale force winds were smashing enormous breakers against the cliffs. And by now we were passing supporters out encouraging their clubmates.

About halfway along the Seven Sisters I crested one of the hills and saw a man leaning against a 5-bar gate at the base of the next climb. I thought he was another supporter from one of the running clubs, but when I reached the gate he turned towards me and I saw his running number. His face was almost completely white with specks of salt from dried sweat, and he was obviously tired! The organisers had kindly left this particular gate locked – and he just didn't have the strength to climb over it! Mind you, I only just managed it. Soon after that I reached Checkpoint 4, at the Birling Gap. I wasn't hungry, but the marshal thought I looked like I needed another Mars bar. I'd already discovered I couldn't eat a Mars bar and run at the same time, so I took her advice. A walk before starting the climb up onto Beachy Head seemed like a good idea.

Too steep to run down

After passing Beachy Head it's downhill all the way, and you don't have to save anything for a sprint finish because it's so steep at the end that you have to jog and walk down. Even so, it was great to cross the line. I'd got round the course in 4:09, and every part of my body was

aching the same amount so I knew I didn't have any injuries.

After changing and swapping stories, I set off back to Canterbury. After driving for about an hour I pulled up outside a quiet country pub, and fell out of the car in the foetal position. I managed to straighten my legs and back, so that by the time I reached the bar I was standing upright. I always find it easier to get served when I can stand up on my own. Having purchased a pint of finest ale I settled down in front of the log fire and took out the race instructions.

'a 26 (or so) mile course'

The event is "not intended as a race, but as a personal challenge event for all to test their ability and endurance", they said. The course features a total ascent of 3,500 feet plus a couple of dozen assorted gates, stiles, bridges, cattle grids, and several long flights of steps. Although the organisers know that the four checkpoints are at precisely 8.8, 12.2, 16.7 and 22.6 miles, they don't admit to knowing how long the course is. It is a "26 (or so) mile course", they say, and runners should expect to take 30-40 minutes more than a road marathon. The runners are expected to finish in under 5 hours, the joggers are expected to take 5 – 7 hours. Walkers are advised to take a torch! And, just in case you treat it as a race, the results give your finishing time to the nearest minute, but the runners are not necessarily listed in the order that they finish!

That night, as I made the family listen to the story of my day, I wondered whether I would do it again one day, but I couldn't make up my mind before I went to bed to sleep the deep and peaceful sleep of a man who has drunk too much Polish vodka.

What they say about...massage

In a new series, The Harrier talks to health practitioners in the Canterbury area about running – ways to prevent injury and improve performance. Health and fitness therapist **Christelle Karoli** talks about massage.

Christelle sees runners as sportspeople whose bodies develop in a more healthy way than others – such as cyclists or boxers – who tend to focus on just part of their physique. 'The whole muscular system is well developed for runners,' she says. 'It is all in proportion. Like swimmers, they have to tone up all over.' But massage can help improve running performance

in several ways, she says – particularly by increasing the elasticity of the muscle, washing away lactic acid and other toxins after running and by reducing scar tissue. Professional athletes often have a massage before and after each sports event – but Christelle says that even a monthly massage can help other athletes. 'Runners build up very powerful hamstrings, quadriceps and glutes,' she says. 'But when they build up their power, they often do it at the price of muscle elasticity.' If you feel yourself stiffening up while running or afterwards, you should probably spend more

time stretching in future – but a massage could help. Christelle – originally from Nimes in France – has been practising in Canterbury (at, for instance, the Christchurch gym in St George's Place and the Watling Street Therapy Centre) for seven years. Christelle Karoli – 01227 458537

Relays

This summer's season of five friendly relay races is due to start in May, and run fortnightly (Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm) until July. Depending on the locations – likely to be Folkestone, Minnis Bay, Ashford's Victoria Park, Deal seafront and Canterbury (organised by Invicta), we will meet at about 6.15 to 6.30 at

the KSRC car park to arrange lifts and teams. Everyone should get a run. Teams are of 3 or 4 runners, and each leg is about 2.5 miles.

More details from **Bob Davidson** and **Steve Clark**.

Our latest coach

Martin Skeet has become the latest Harrier to qualify as a coach by taking the level 1 qualification of the British Athletics Federation.

Martin, a firefighter, has already done a two-week course to qualify him as a physical training instructor at his work where he takes two circuit training sessions each week.

'I'm quite keen to go on and do level 2', he says of his BAF training (which – as with our other coaches – was paid for by the club). He is particularly interested in helping beginners develop their running.

Thanet Duathlon

FIVE Harriers entered the Thanet Duathlon in late February - the race for people who find a 5-mile run a bit too easy and want to preface it with a 9-mile bike ride. Of 106 entrants, only 87 completed both parts in full. **Pete Worsley** was 18th overall (bike 43.48; run 33.11; total 76.59). **Sarah Maguire** was the 3rd lady back and **Wendy Smith** was the first lady vet. But it is not as easy as it might sound. Wendy early on found herself last on the field – because she was in the wrong gear but found it difficult to change out on the sands where the race started. Fortunately, she

had practiced the bit where you throw your bike down and start running. 'Your legs go like jelly at that stage,' she said. 'But they get better after a while.'

You don't ever know

The January Harrier contained my article on how I was continuing to enjoy my running in my later veteran years. In the article I made the comment "Time takes its toll and nobody is exempt". Little did I realise how prophetic that comment was and that a few weeks later I would have to give up running permanently.

I had experienced pain in my knees for some time, more in the right than the left. Like most runners I just shrugged it off and carried on pretending it would ease, (no pain no gain and all that expletive). It didn't of course. So I had a thorough examination which resulted in being informed that as I had pounded the roads over so many years my right knee joint was grinding away merrily bone to bone - the prognosis being that if I carried on I would certainly seriously jeopardize my general mobility in the future.

Having to make the decision stop, after a lifetime of running, was traumatic to say the least. However, as the prognosis concluded that I should have no trouble in walking,

cycling or swimming, I now cover the distances that I would have run by walking briskly or belting round longer distances on my mountain bike. I'll get round to swimming when I am in warmer climes.

I am, of course, still very interested in club activities and will appear on club nights from time to time (loud groans from the members) and I will still be available to marshal or whatever in our club races.

John Minshull

Races

A request from the committee: Could Harriers entering races pick up flyers about any other races they see and put them in the races folder at KSRC? Harriers might also want to look at the 2003 edition of 'Rundown Events' listing 2000 UK races this year.

Also, could you inform Alastair or Fayne of your race results and times so that we can keep up to date.

Canterbury Harriers Committee

John Hartley Chair
Gerry Reilly Head coach
Carol Reid Treasurer
Stephanie Lam Secretary
Roy Gooderson Admin Officer

Runners Representatives:

Fayne Brenner
Steve Clark
Joe Hicks
Simon Kendall
Sue Reilly
Alastair Telford