



The Harrier

December
2003

The newsletter of the Canterbury Harriers

Presentation Evening

Tickets for the Presentation Evening can be bought for £15 for members (£20 for non-members) by asking any member of the Committee (see list on back page). The dinner takes place at 7pm at Howfield Manor, Chartham Hatch on the evening of Saturday, 6 December. Deadline for buying tickets (heavily subsidised by the club) is Tuesday, 25 November. See letter enclosed.

Blean Woods XC

We need lots of marshals and other helpers for our XC race on Sunday, 30 November at 11am. We also need people to run in the race. It would be particularly good if friends and family of runners could help out. Also, could people please not park in the RSPB car park.

Kent Fitness XC attendance

This has been rather disappointing so far. At Swanley, we had the third lowest turnout of all the 16 teams. However, unlike other teams, the club actually pays the entry fees for each member that takes part so it is free to each Harrier who runs. We also arrange transport to each venue. Joe Hicks has suggested that we give some sort of incentive, such as a T-shirt, to each member who completes five races in the league each season. That would go along with the certificate that the league provides to commemorate the achievement.

* The next race in the league is at Nurstead Court, Meopham on 23 November at 11am. We shall be meeting at the King's School Recreation Centre at 9am to arrange lifts. (Multimap estimates the journey time as about 35 minutes but we had better leave at the usual time as it is a new venue.)

XC Championship deadlines

The deadline for these two Kent Championship events are as follows: Kent Vets' and Clubman's Championships (on 6 December): 24 November. (No, I don't know why it's not the Clubmen's Championship or why there is not a clubwoman's championship.) Kent County Championships (on 3 January): 8 December.

Deal (and other results)

Roy Palmer won the Vet 40 prize in the Deal 5 – and our ladies (Fayne Brenner, Jenni Van Deelen and Sally Bell) won the team prize. Eight Harriers entered the Rheims Half Marathon (see page 2). Jenni ran the Abingdon Marathon in 3.33.42, easily beating her 3.45 target – and putting in the second best Marathon time for Harrier women in the whole of 2003. Rosie McDermott ran the Ashford Quest 10k in 39.57, setting a new record for the club since it was reformed in 1997. Sarah May was second in the first Kent Fitness league XC – ahead of internationals Janice Moorkite and Debbie Percival. Joe Hicks ran the challenging Beachy Head Marathon in 4.12 (just a few minutes slower than last year) despite the seizing up of the quads in the last few miles. See next issue for his report. Dianne August (see her article on page 3) ran the Great North Run – along with John Hartley and Bob Moreton.

Girlie night out

Fayne is organising a Girls' Night Out dinner on Friday, 21 November – 'to celebrate another year of running, all our birthdays, PBs, PWs, personal victories, team wins...and anything else you can think of' – so the women should contact her (732058) asap if they are interested in going along.

Results plea

The usual plea for any results to be sent to Alastair and Fayne as soon as possible. We can often get coverage in the Kent Gazette if Alastair and Fayne gets results on a Sunday night. If you are in a race, could you liaise with other Harriers to see that one person gets the full list of Harrier results and phones them in?

Subs (and AGM)

The annual sub has been held to £10 for the sixth or seventh year running. Please could you pay up (to a committee member) as soon as poss. (Every year, a few people need chasing – a job which is not relished by the chasers.) The accounts are enclosed. Many thanks to Carol Reid, last year's Treasurer – and to John Minshull for taking over from her this year. See back page for report, including comments from Chairman John Hartley.

FORTHCOMING RACES

November 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 6	11.00	Kent Veterans & Clubmans Champ'ship	Parkwood Sch, Swanley
7	10.00	Thanet 10	Westgate Bay
26	11.00	Christmas Cracker 5	Waterfront Club, Whitstable
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
25	11.00	Barretts Canterbury 10	Canterbury College
February 1	11.00	Kent Fitness League XC – 7	Oxleas Wood, Eltham
29		Inter-club relay XC	Mote Park

Rheims 2003 – by John Marshall

Eight Harriers took the early Saturday afternoon ferry to Calais for the 280Km motorway drive to Rheims. The hired Toyota people carrier made easy work of the A26 with the hotel "Fast" soon located on a trading estate on the outskirts of the city. We were greeted by Gerald from the twinning association who handed us our running numbers and T shirts. The hotel was basic but clean, warm and comfortable – just the job for a pre-race stopover.

The pre-race pasta party at the exhibition centre was tempting but lost out to a city centre meal in a big boisterous brasserie. Those having the vegetarian option were a little surprised to be served with a plate of plain spaghetti – no sauce, just spaghetti: it's tough being a vegetarian in France! The meat eaters were also a little taken aback when served with a raw egg in half a shell to disperse over their pasta carbanara. However, the desserts were very acceptable – you can always get a decent tart in France.

Razzmatazz at French races

As the temperature was dropping rapidly we didn't linger in central Rheims – a quick peep in a sport's shop window where a pair of Nike Pegasus trainers were displayed at 100 Euros (at £70.00ish, they are much cheaper in the UK) and it was back to the hotel for an early night. The chill in the air prompted discussion over what should be worn the next day – jogging bottoms, hats, gloves? Timing chips still had to be attached to shoes. The tension was beginning to build.

The usual French breakfast of two bread rolls, a croissant and large amounts of coffee (read caffeine) was followed by much visiting of toilets: nerves were getting taught, stomachs were

turning. The tension was heightened by the traffic jam created by 9000 runners all choosing the same moment to descend on race headquarters. Parked cars were everywhere, on verges, pavements in nearby office car parks. We eventually found a slot and legged the last half mile to the start area with just enough time to compose ourselves for the off.

There is always a lot of razzmatazz at French races. The PA switched between loud pop music and official announcements. Everywhere there were boards and flags advertising the sponsors – Renault, Adidas, Ville de Reims, PUM and Cora (I'm not sure of the last two but I'm certain that we should be grateful for their support). You know the scene – polythene wrapped runners, one leg stretched out while they try and push over a wall, watches constantly checked, men darting off to not-such-a-public-place for one last pee.

'big race' feel

There is certainly a "big race" feel about Rheims. In fact there are four races – a marathon, half marathon, 10km and a children's race – all with separate start times and places, surely an organiser's nightmare. The Harriers Anika, Fayne, Dave, Dave, John, John, Nicholas and Wayne were all entered for the "semi-marathon". The cool, dry and still morning coupled with the mostly flat course promised some good times. Just the right time in the Harrier's year to post a decent result for the league table.

In the press of runners under the inflated arch that formed the start, there was just time to exchange a few words with a group of Dartford Harriers and we were off. The course soon picked up the canal-side road, initially heading out of Rheims. We swung round at a jazz band taking the opposite canal bank for a long straight run back into the city. At about 5Km we passed

the leading full-marathon runners, who were about 1km into their race, going in the opposite direction.

I passed Wayne at about 8K (this proved to be a silly move) going at a pace according to the 5km clock that would give me a final time of 1hr.35min. The others were not to be seen having lost contact in the melee that formed the start. At 15k I was holding a nice steady, sensible pace, but, the tell-tale signs were beginning to show: the kilometres were definitely getting longer, the legs heavier and why was I thinking how nice it will be to flake out when I eventually make the finish? By 18k things were getting a little difficult with other runners drifting past me, Wayne being one of them. It was now quite painful with my pace dropping rapidly and the gait becoming ungainly. I had blown. However, I promised myself a little treat - I was going to walk at 19k. I could still manage to get under 1hr40 if I walked quickly enough! But, what joy, at 19k we turned a corner and a long down-hill stretch presented itself. This got me to 20k without walking and with only 1k to go I dug deep and ran all the way to the finish. I was being passed thick and fast in the last kilometre, yet in the last 200m I managed to pass some poor devil in a worse state than me! I must do more training miles next time.

An enormous cup 18" tall

The harriers regrouped outside the mobile showers in the cavernous exhibition centre, exchanging our race experiences, swapping times and gobbling the sweet tit-bits from the goody bags. But we didn't linger as we had to be "presented" as the Canterbury contingent. We assembled on a podium beneath a giant TV screen showing live pictures of the marathon that was still finishing just outside. Along with a group from Florence (also twinned with Rheims) we received an enormous cup standing about 18" tall and as much in diameter. Another photo call on the Rheims Tourist Board stand and we were whisked away to the restaurant. But not myself as I was feeling a bit uncle-dick and preferred to go outside and watch the full marathon finishers. However, I was able to return to the restaurant to join the farewells and

thanks to our generous hosts from the Canterbury/Rheims twinning Association.

On leaving the race HQ we checked the recently posted computer printouts to find our times and positions. The final score being: **Nicholas Pirot** running on home soil, a fine PB of 1hr 23min 32 sec; cigar smoking, French speaking **Dave Felton** a more than useful half marathon debut of 1hr 26min 14 sec; **Dave Lightburn** delighted with having the chip timing system confirm that he just managed to dip under 1hr 30 (although official timings later put him at 1 hr 30 min 7 sec; **Wayne Barnett** well pleased with a PB and an 80 second improvement on his recent Windsor Half time with 1hr 36min 16sec; **John Marshall** more than satisfied with 1hr 37 min 44sec (official time 1.38.12) considering his struggle in the last few miles; **John Watson** a little disappointed with 1hr 47min 33sec, outside his recent 1.45.00 Nottingham Half time. **Fayne Brenner** also a little disappointed but remaining cheerful with 1hr 49 min 16sec; and **Anika Davies** almost repeating her Windsor Half time with 2hr 10min 50 sec and demanding to know when the next race would be so that she could break two hours!

Thanks must go to **Gerry Reilly** for organising the trip, even though he didn't travel and to Gerald and Therese of the twinning association for their superb hospitality.

* Fayne and David added the following information: The organisers put on a 'huge, sumptuous four-course meal for lunch', where they entertained the twin teams. Anika and Fayne were both given bouquets, and the team overall was given eight bottles of champagne (which we want to share in the club sometime). The crowds were marvellous - and some very serious runners were competing in the Marathon.

Great North Run

By Dianne August

21 SEPTEMBER 2003

NEWCASTLE TO SOUTH SHIELDS

This has to be the greatest fun run ever. For those of you who have never experienced taking part in the largest half marathon in the world I would thoroughly recommend entering this event. With 47,000 runners (!!??) - well there are some club runners - and being in the company of some of the friendliest and amusing people I have ever met - what better way to spend a weekend.

It's not called the Great North run for nothing. The vast field of participants line up (in what appears to be any order!) at what can be described as one big party. You will be lucky to achieve a PB here! If, like me, your training was pretty non-existent during the long hot summer you will be spurred on throughout the course by the fact that many who started in front of you are already walking at the 3 mile mark! (If only Paula hadn't been competing I really thought I could have stood a chance of a mention!) Having competed in the London Marathon several times (me - not Paula) I really didn't believe any other race could compare. How wrong I was. The race starts on a dual carriageway just on the outskirts of the city centre. As I mentioned 47,000 runners

congregate on the two carriageways and the fun begins. There is a **long wait** due to the fact that you need to be there at 8.30 a.m. so as not to miss the baggage buses but the race does not start until 2 hours later. The wait brings with it the usual runners problems; nerves, cold muscles and the inevitable! Why are there never enough toilets? Fortunately the banks of the dual carriageway had been thoughtfully landscaped with numerous trees and bushes. Much to the amusement (!!?) of nearby residents, passing traffic and Sunday morning dog walkers many desperate participants bared all in the call of nature. An announcement over the PA system confirmed that the BBC were receiving complaints about the live coverage of the race.

Would I recognise anyone on my video recording of the day when I returned home! The race started but there I remained. Eventually we moved and the pace gradually quickened. The **thrill of running over the Tyne Bridge** was soon in front of me - I felt elated being part of the largest half marathon ever to have been staged. By the time the race was underway it was very sunny and quite breezy but the miles soon disappeared mainly due to the **public support** around the course and the repartee amongst the runners. It was wonderful to have so many **live bands** throughout the route and to see families enjoying a great day out; a true carnival spirit. The course ends after a fairly long upward drag with the last mile on the flat along the sea front at South Shields. The welcome is overwhelming and at this point it's even possible to make a **sprint finish!** (i did manage to finish in under 2 hours)

If you are able to I recommend you make a long weekend out of the event as there is so much to see and do around Newcastle. The city has the liveliest night life in the UK, fantastic restaurants and galleries with many events organized linked to the race weekend. A word of advice though if you want to take part next year **apply NOW** (www.greatrun.org) It will be oversubscribed early in the new year and places are allocated on a first come basis (book accommodation early too as everything gets booked pretty quickly) We actually travelled by car on the Thursday prior to the race and had a good journey. However, the return trip on the Sunday evening was a experience not to be repeated! If you are clever (like John Hartley!) you organize things better and fly from Stansted which, if booked early, is more economical than driving and certainly less hassle.

We had a great weekend exploring Newcastle together with the amazingly rugged Northumberland coastline. A pre-race run along a sandy beach south of the Farne Islands will stay with me as one of those "special moments all runners experience from time to time. This was followed by lunch at the tiny fishing port of Craster where we found a great pub on the headland and enjoyed plates of fresh crab sandwiches and bowls of home-made chips.

If you have time travel further north and at low tide drive out on the causeway to Holy Island but be sure to get your timings right or you could miss the race!

A good year....

'It's been a good year in terms of individual and team performances,' said chairman **John Hartley** at the AGM on 23 October. 'There have been very many enjoyable activities. It's helped to sustain and maintain a very good atmosphere in the club. We're known as the friendly club...We have maintained financial stability...I look forward to another good year.'

Fortunately, John has agreed to carry on as Chairman – and **John Minshull** is also back in his role as Treasurer (as **Carol Reid**, who was Treasurer last year, has stood down under pressure of work). Membership grew from 100 to 124 (including 38 ladies) during the year. Our races went well. The Whitstable 10k raised nearly £3,000 for us – and so enables us to subsidise or pay for a vast range of benefits for members from XC fees to the

presentation dinner to kit, pub runs, Rheims and other race entries.

People going in for the Marathon draw will need to have been fully paid-up members from 1 June in the year of the draw.

Various new developments are afoot – including a summer track events competition (400m, 800, 1 m and 5k), the ranking of 5k races in our league tables and the possibility of an October Canterbury Festival race.

Canterbury Harriers Committee

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