



The Harrier

April 2007

The newsletter of the Canterbury Harriers

Welcome to the April edition of The Harrier.

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Summertime, and the living is easy! Dates for the up coming inter club relays, as well as the Saxon shore and North Downs Way relays.

A novice's journey towards the London Marathon. By Debbie Clifford

How nice it would be to begin this article by telling you, "It was my love of running that drew me to the Canterbury Harriers" I've never really liked running; I'm here in the name of vanity- to lose weight! Running seemed at the time easier than dieting. This is why I joined the club in August 2006.

Looking back at the beginning of my running efforts I feel proud of my running achievements. Whilst I know I'll never be a Paula Radcliffe, Carol Reed or Barbara Wenman (I wouldn't be so sure! Ed) I have learnt and improved so much.

Entering races such as the Wingham 10k and the Great South Run slowly fed my confidence. With this new found running confidence I naively entered the London Marathon. Watching this annual event on TV always has me in tears and I've often, whilst sitting on my sofa said I'd love to give it a go. However, once I had received my reject letter I wasn't to disappointed. Entering the Harriers draw seemed worth a try. After all my running buddies Tina, Wendy and Karen had already got their places.

My name was drawn out by Russell Williams (thanks Russell!) After the initial shock and embarrassment, because some real hard core REAL runners had also entered, I

began to feel really privileged at being given the opportunity.

In terms of marathon experience I have learned a lot:

- The kit you wear- your feet need lavish attention A proper pair of running shoes bought from a specialist running shop who will check your gait, is a must
- Primark sports Bras are useless!
- There are wonderful energy drinks and gels etc which are isotonic and hypotonic, it's a foreign language, which claims to enhance your running abilities. I'll drink to that!
- Running makes you a hypochondriac! I would like to think this is because I'm new to running and nothing to do with my neurotic tendencies! Over the course of six months running I've had asthma, which was actually a lack of fitness, IBS cured by taking Gerry's advice and eating more fruit and veg, skin cancer, a mole dropped off due to friction with vest and violent mood swings caused by exhaustion. On top of this I now have the appetite of a horse!

But there are some positives:

- I am so pleased with my improved fitness. My journey to just this point of the marathon training has been amazing. I would like to thank Sue Coombs for her generous help and support. Each week Sue meets the London Marathon "special needs" group for an earlier start on Thursdays. This gives us enough time to complete a decent run and it has really improved my running ability
- Free physio! From Paul Devitt. My aching limbs always feel tones lighter after a visit-thanks Paul

- Each Sunday since January we've religiously done our long distance runs and I never thought I would say this but, I've really enjoyed them. It's so nice to reach a level of fitness where you can "talk and run"
Thanks to my running buddies Tina, Karen and Wendy we've had such a laugh as we've chatted through the miles.

Without the Canterbury Harriers I really wouldn't be capable of taking part in the London Marathon. Gerry's training albeit a little too demanding for my pace has been a back bone to my development. I look back and smile at my cross country attempts, the uplifting experience of my first half marathon in the rain and sleet of Dover. I'm dreading the Thanet 20 I just hope my ankle doesn't cause me too much pain!

It is with excitement that I now look forward to the London Marathon. I know it sounds gushing but the Harriers are really inspirational and encouraging from their kind words of support to their wealth of advice and wisdom. Thank you to you all.

(Since Debbie wrote this article she did in fact complete the Thanet 20 in a magnificent 3 hours a 23 minutes and it wasn't as painful as she thought it would be!

London, Here I come!!!

PS You can find out how Debbie and the rest of the Harriers did in London in our review of the London Marathon in our next edition

At the same time that Debbie was running the Thanet 20 Mark and Barbara Wenman were in the slightly more exotic environs of Barcelona ready to see if their hard training over many months was about to bear fruit in the Barcelona Marathon. Here is their account.

"Been there, Done that, Got the T-Shirt". The tale of the Barcelona Two. By Barbara and Mark Wenman

We first began contemplating running a marathon last autumn. Having completed numerous 10Ks, 10 milers and half

marathons since we started running a couple of years ago, the shadow of "the big one" loomed ominously over us. With the rapid advance of years, it would be now or never. The chances of us both getting into London at our first attempt seemed slim. Paris was a possible alternative but we dithered for too long and entries had closed before we did anything about it. Barcelona looked good- a flattish course in an interesting city and hopefully on March 4th, coolish weather. It also coincided with our birthdays, so a long weekend away would be a nice treat to ourselves. Non-running friends were quite envious- until they heard that running a marathon was part of the deal! Through the wonders of modern technology our entries were submitted at the click of a mouse and confirmed by return. That was it. We were committed for better or worse!

We began the training programme in earnest on November 13th-16 weeks of Gerry's grueling regime and no let up for Christmas or the New Year. It was relentless and at times tedious in the extreme, but having a spouse to persuade, cajole, badger or bully you into training on those dark miserable evenings or cold damp mornings whilst nursing a hangover (Mark only!) made a big difference. Having someone to chat to or argue with whilst pounding the now all too familiar streets of Canterbury helped enormously.. The relief at reaching the taper point of the programme was immense no more 60 or 45 mile weeks, no more 3 hour training runs on a Sunday morning . The hard work was done.

We flew to Barcelona on Friday evening and checked into the Grand Hotel Central. We had been checking weather forecasts for several days and as predicted it was warm, approximately 19C so short sleeves were enough the next day as we headed off to the Expo to collect our race chips etc.

Organisation didn't seem to be the Spaniards strong point and we were met with long queues that moved very slowly. Some two hours later we emerged with our goody bags having met a group of about twenty fellow English runners, all male and intending to go "on the lash" that night! Not much fun and frivolity from us oldies though

and after a meal of pasta and strictly one glass of wine we were tucked up in bed by 10pm.

Next morning we made our way to the start and checked our bags in at 7.30am ready for the 8.30am start. As we were applying the factor 20 we were surprised to see a Thanet roadrunner who came over to introduce herself - obviously she too found the appeal of Barcelona greater than the delights of the Thanet 20.

Facilities at the start were good with plenty of toilets (always a consideration for female athletes) and before long we began to congregate at the starting pens. It was an impressive sight - 8,000 runners (marathon and 10K together) amassed on the wide avenue in front of the imposing palaces in the Placa D'Espanya with fountains cascading.

Despite the numbers the start wasn't too congested and we were surprised that we were able to get into our stride quickly. The route was varied passing through a lot of the well known sights of Barcelona which helped take our minds off the race (if only!). There was a gradual incline to the Camp Nou (FC Barcelona's home) at about 3km then back down into the city centre passing the famous Sagrada Familia on past Barcelona's version of the Gherkin at about halfway, down to the beach and along the sea front (where it was particularly hot) then back into the Parc de la Ciutadella, up the Ramblas and then a climb back up to the Placa D'Espanya for the finish.

All the roads were wide and the support was good. There were plenty of drink stations and sponges on route, and the supply of jelly babies stashed away in our pockets provided us needed energy and temporary distraction despite having melted into a SOGGY CONGEALED MESS IN MARK'S SHORTS!

We had had several discussions beforehand about whether we would run the race together and, in the event, we did until about 23 miles when Mark gradually edged away. We both found the last three miles hard going and the last mile slightly uphill in what was now about 20 degrees was quite a

struggle.

It was a huge relief to cross the line (Mark ahead by 33 secs) and we were quick to take advantage of the free massage on offer in the hope that this might make walking the next day a little easier. Needless to say, the hotel bathroom was fully utilized in the afternoon and never before has a pint of cold beer / glass of champagne tasted so good. Tired but happy we enjoyed a celebratory meal in a nearby tapas bar, thankful that all the effort and hard work had paid off and with a real sense of achievement at completing our first marathon.

The question now is: Will we run another one? Ask Mark and the answer is definitely NO but..... his memory will fade so we shall see, WATCH THIS SPACE.

PS Thanks to everyone for all the advice, support and good wishes. They were much appreciated and really helped.

Canterbury Harriers' successful Kent Fitness League season

Canterbury Harriers took several of the honours at the end of season awards. The league, consisting of seventeen running clubs from across Kent, has seven cross country matches throughout the winter season. They operate a full combined league (men and women) a women's league and an individual league for all competitors completing 5 or more of the matches.

This year's top honours went to the ladies who were crowned champions of the Women's league after solid and consistent performances throughout the season. The team comprised of the scorers, Sue Coombes, Emma Greatrix, Sarah Maguire, Sarah May, Wendy Smith, Barbara Wenman and Frances Wood with strong support from Tina Jones and Wendy Osmond who competed in five or more matches.

There was further success in the individual competition with Emma Greatrix taking the prize in the women's vet 35 category and Barbara Wenman taking the women's vet 45 title. For the men Andy Farrant

capped a superb season by taking the most improved male runner title.

In the combined league the Harriers gained a very respectable 5th position.

2006/7 Cross Country Presentation Evening: Thursday 26th April, 8.30pm

Soon after the Thursday evening run on 26th April the Club will be putting on a free Buffet upstairs in the bar at Kings Recreation Centre to present awards and celebrate a successful season. We look forward to seeing you all on the night. So make it a date for your diary!

Whitstable 10k: Calling all Members!

This year's Whitstable 10k will be held on May 7th Bank Holiday. As ever it will be a sell out event. To ensure we put on another excellent show can we please have as many club members volunteer for marshalling and other essential duties.

If you can help on the day please contact Steve Clark on: 01227 711272.

Inter Club Relay dates:

Now that the grueling winter cross country series has concluded we can all look forward to getting the sun on our backs after a hard day at work during the evening inter club relay season that starts in May

The full dates are:-

15th May start 19.15pm Folkestone

29th May start 19.30pm Minnis Bay

12th June 19.30pm Ashford

26th June 19.30pm Deal

10th July 19.30 Canterbury

Further dates for your diary:

The ever popular Saxon Shore and North Downs Way relays will this year be held on 9th June and 16th June respectively

Canterbury Harriers Committee

Marco Keir: - 01227 276029	Chairman
John Minshull: - 01795 532226	Treasurer
Roy Gooderson: - 01227 454449	Admin Officer
Tim Richardson-Perks: - 07792 833846	Club Secretary
Gerry Reilly: - 01227 477148	Head Coach
Steve Clark: - 01227 711272	Coach
Carol Reid: - 01227 379055	Coach
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Susan Coombes:	Runners Rep
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Mark Wenman: - 01227 765336	Runners Rep
Sean Reilly:	Co-opted Member