

**BEDFORD HARRIERS**



**Awards Edition**

# *On the Run*

January 2016



**Contributors:**

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**Magazine Editor:**

Lynne Greenard

## Message from the editor

Well, it certainly doesn't seem a year ago that I was writing an introductory piece in this magazine. Where has the time gone? I think that this year you've sent me the most wide and varied articles ever; all of them inspiring in their own way. So, many thanks to those who have contributed.

As some of you may know, I've not been able to run at all since the Grizzly last March (see Ian Kingston's article). To be fair, it was nothing to do with the race but due to a long-standing health issue.

Luckily though, being a member of the Harriers means that in spite of my being somewhat incapacitated, there are still lots of activities available to take part in. During the summer, I joined in Tuesday evening cycling with Alison Cooper (organised on a loop so it doesn't matter if you can't keep up with the leaders, or even the back markers) and now I'm attending Saturday morning swim training at Trinity pool.

Although being ready on the side of the pool at 7am -well, almost- sounds daunting to most of us, I always come away feeling really glad I made the effort. Originally, I went along knowing I couldn't physically do some of the drills, and was worried I might not be able to fit into the coaches' (bless their hearts) 'swim smooth' regime but, they kindly adjusted the exercises so that I could do them at my own pace. Technique is scrutinised and sometimes videoed so that those irritating bad habits are easily identified and can be worked on. Forgive me if I'm stating the obvious, but swimming really doesn't get better simply by doing more; your stamina might improve but, basically, it's all about technique. So, in spite of there being limits to what I can do, I've found these sessions really enjoyable and helpful and have definitely improved my time over 400m even though my overall fitness is pretty bad. All I need now is someone to teach me how not to get lost in open water!

By citing my own personal experience, the point I'm trying to make is that, at whatever level one can, or wants, to participate, the Harriers really does have something for everyone who is interested in running or triathlon-related disciplines (the scope has been widened even more by the inclusion of EVAC events. See Neil Lovesay's article for more info.) Whether you're at the top of your game or floundering somewhere near the bottom, you can always be assured of support from other members. This is particularly evident in the bar on a Wednesday night during exercise of the right/left arm, but still, should not be underestimated. I know I'm not the first one to make the observation that the Harriers really is a rather special club. There I go, stating the obvious, yet again.

Whatever you plan to do in 2016 – and perhaps these articles might give you some new ideas - enjoy it and DON'T FORGET TO WRITE TO ME ABOUT IT. I'm all ears!

Lynne Greenard

## 'Chair's chatter'

**Belated Happy New Year to all Harriers members and their families.**

This evening heralds the culmination of the achievements in 2015 of Harriers members through the annual award ceremony. This recognises and celebrates the accomplishments and triumphs of many, many members.

Congratulations to all the winners and at the same time let's not forget those who don't actually appear in the honours but have, nevertheless, achieved incredible personal success.

At the start of a New Year (well, it was when I wrote this) it is appropriate to remind members of the huge number of activities that take place throughout the year. In no particular order, they include, but are not limited to the following:

- Monday & Wednesday evening coached training sessions
- Oakley 20
- Quiz night
- Friday evening coached circuit sessions (Autumn & Winter)
- Beginners night
- Awards night
- Friday evening coached track sessions (Spring & Summer)
- EVAC Track & Field events
- Saturday morning coached swimming (Not summer)
- Cross country league
- Stevenage relays (a favourite of mine)
- London Marathon
- 30 Bridges run (guess that will be 31 Bridges run this year)
- Doug Anderson 5k
- Bedford Harriers Half Marathon
- London Marathon draw
- 5k time trials
- Bedfordshire AAA Cross Country
- SEAA Cross Country champs
- On The Run
- AGM & volunteers draw
- Weekend cycling sessions
- Weekend running
- Squeaky Bone Relay
- Club championships including 5k, 5 mile, 10k, 10 mile, half marathon, marathon, ultra, cross country, - sprint, off-road and middle distance triathlons, duathlon (new for 2016)
- Thursday evening cycling league
- Round Norfolk Relay

All these activities require a colossal number of volunteers and, whilst the club is extremely fortunate in having a large active membership that is ready, willing and able to volunteer its services for the greater good we should, nevertheless, not become complacent. To sustain the current level of activity it is desirable and necessary that our members continue to offer their services, be willing to learn new skills and accept responsibility - as many already do.

**May I take this rare opportunity to publicly thank those who do volunteer; the Club really does appreciate your endeavours and these efforts have made Bedford Harriers AC one of the most esteemed and revered running clubs in the country.**

Steve Crane (chairman)



# From Dubious Runner to Unlikely Coach (well almost!)



Caroline Diggle's journey with the Harriers



**I started running with about 8 of my friends in 2009. Just as many before us, we started with Race for Life in July 2009 and predictably, by March 2010, only two of us remained; myself and Dawn, who then somehow found ourselves on the start line for Oakley 20!**

I love running with Bedford Harriers particularly as I never imagined I could ever do it but, after my friend left last summer for a new life in the USA, I felt like a large part of my personal running enjoyment had gone with her.

My remedy was to throw myself into marathons (which I truly love) but I always thought there must be another level to running happiness which didn't involve standing on the start line with butterflies in my stomach and knacker

ing myself out over 26.2 miles. I wanted to learn more about how the body works in response to exercise and why it makes us feel good. So, I enrolled myself on a course in 'Gym Instruction' at Bedford College.

After passing the course and completing two exams, I felt like I had something to offer the club so I asked

Steve Crane if I could help out with the beginners. Helping out turned into 'why don't you do some sessions?' I thought 'OK, I will have a go'.

I wondered what I had got myself into as I didn't feel very comfortable talking in front of groups, never mind leading them, but having to shout out instructions in front of up to 30 people did wonders for my confidence.

I'd never started with the beginners myself so I didn't really know much about how it worked but, WOW, what an amazing bunch of people they turned out to be. With the excellent guidance, coaching and support of Mike and Darren, the group went from complete non-runners to 10k in a relatively short space of time. A very hardworking, fun and motivated group, were such fun to be with.



I must also say that not only have they all got fit and active but also one particular lady has lost a huge amount of weight. Well done and huge CONGRATULATIONS to Jasbir Nanglu; you look fabulous.

Maybe the beginners are equally as inspiring and friendly every year but this is the first time I've been involved so you'll have to forgive me for being a bit soppy about it! An additional bonus was that my sister joined too and I am truly delighted she decided to pluck up the courage to make that first move. As I'm sure everyone is aware, it can be really daunting the first time you walk into a stadium full of 'proper runners'!

I do feel I have got past the need for wanting personal bests and racing, though I'll never tire of marathons! I want to run because I like the scenery, the feel-good factor it gives me and the inspirational people I am surrounded by. I feel that joining the coaching team and helping this special club, has not only enriched my running but also enriched me as a person.

I never thought that my sister and I would be running as Bedford Harriers together and for me that is the best thing of all.

**So, a HUGE 'well done' to our Beginners 2015. Bring on 2016!!**

**Hope they'll have me back next year.**



Having moved from Germany to the UK for work, from a city into a relatively small town and from a large circle of friends around me to a place where I didn't know anyone, I was willing to overthrow my convictions and give it a try. And this is what I got:

- A new name: "Fridrick? Frederica? Can I just call you Fred?" thanks Nette! Did you have any idea how confused people would be in restaurants where I reserved a table for Fred and a female dares to claim the reservation?
- Fit friends: "Are you sure you should be training after yesterday?" and lots of running expertise "Use your arms! Expand your stride!"
- Dinners and drinks after training - brilliant!
- A strong commitment to go running in cold and wet conditions and fantastic weekends of racing all over the country.

• Marvellous distractions whilst running so you don't even realise how much you've done. E.g. "Fantastic time last weekend." "What was the course like?" "Did you see the bake off last week?" "What's your plan for the next months?" "And then I added roasted cashews to it and mixed it all up, ..." "Watch it, Post! Puddle!" "Mark is diverting!" and sometimes it's just the breathing of your running mates you can hear...

As well as the physical challenges, which has given me a strength I thought was impossible, I've been so impressed by the incredible friendliness of everyone in the club, the many lifts I have been given, the great weekend runs we have had and, with it, a thorough knowledge of the area in and around Bedford, the great social events and, last but not least, the dedicated and skilled coaches who look after you.

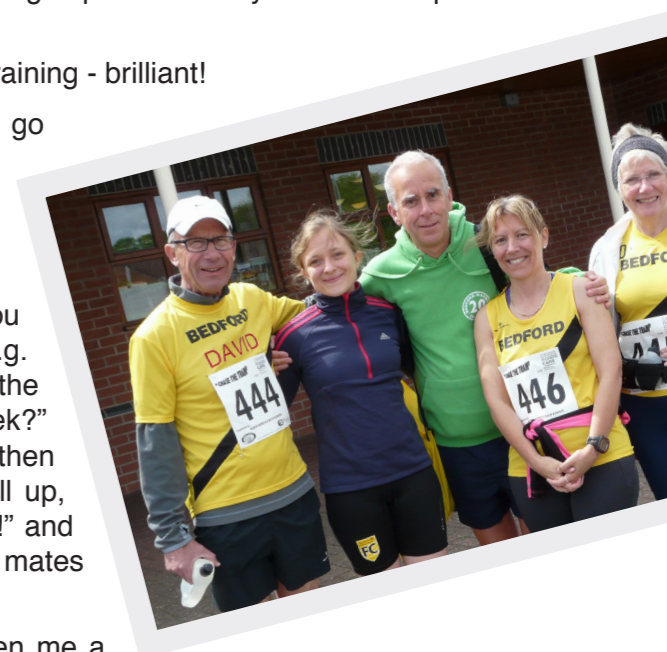
Joining the Harriers was definitely the best decision I made since moving to the UK!

Thanks a mill!

# "Oh to see ourselves as others see us"

- Friederike Schoeps gives her view of the Harriers

"Sport clubs aren't for me, really. Only the fit people go there, you barely talk about anything but sports and you have to drink after training. You have to stick to fixed training times and spend all your weekends organising or attending competitions! I much rather run on my own, enjoy the quietness, my familiar route, the flexibility." Well that was my view for many years... before I joined the Harriers.





## MY JOURNEY SO FAR!

by Michelle Fadden

It all started nearly 3 years ago from the day I stepped through Slimming World's door. From then on I concentrated on shedding the pounds. After a year I then picked up a pair of trainers and began to follow the Bedford Harriers training schedule for beginners until I was comfortable with pounding the streets of Bedford on my own (well plus the music I listened to whilst I ran). After a while Chris dragged me around different routes the longest being 9 miles (my first Grafham run - it was tough). That was the first time I met David and Judy Pryor. I only just made it round.

Since then I have joined Bedford Harriers (after continual nagging from my better half). Everyone at Bedford Harriers made me feel welcome when I joined and I could not believe that Ian (Stodge) placed me in the Harder Improvers group (coaches Cint, Nette, David, Steve and Keith).

I have also joined the Lazy Gang who meet every Saturday morning and enjoy the various jaunts across the countryside (loving it).

I have taken part in several runs which include Swineshead 5, Round Norfolk Relay, several Park Runs, Squeaky Bone Relay, Cross Country (loved Bedford cross country the best) and Bedford Half Marathon. Before I forget I have also moved up a running group (only after Angie kept telling me I had to).

At the moment I am looking forward to many more Lazy Gang runs, Watford Half Marathon, Ashridge Boundary run, Wimpole Night run and many more hopefully, especially cross country (I want to use my spikes again).

There are so many different events and different runs that I have not done before. I would not of done half of what I have done without the help and encouragement of Bedford Harriers. Bedford Harriers to me is one big family, it does not matter whether you are slow or fast.

I have caught the running bug. BRING IT ON.

# 26.2 ANY IDIOT CAN RUN BUT IT TAKES A SPECIAL KIND OF IDIOT TO RUN A MARATHON

My one and only previous marathon was some 20 years and 8 months ago, after which, I vowed that not only would I never do another marathon, but also, that I would never even run again!

Fast forward 15 years from that dark day and it was suggested by some that to slow the onset of a thickening waistline, I might want to think about doing some exercise! That's when, nervously, I joined Bedford Harriers.

Fast forward a further 5 years and I found myself being talked into running a marathon with my youngest son and heir, Jack. Your offspring can be so persuasive! Not for us was a marathon in the UK adequate. Oh no, only somewhere in mainland Europe would do and Jack knew just the place. As he had spent some of the past year living in Florence, Italy, this was the place it had to be.

So, race entries secured (because of being only 21, Jack had to have a medical certificate. I didn't! Figure that one out.), flights booked, hotel booked, inadequate amounts of training completed and on Saturday morning we were off – bright-eyed and bushy-tailed but, somewhat fearful of what lay ahead.

We arrived around midday, checked in to our hotel and made our way to the Expo to pick up our numbers and try to avoid being sucked into buying more running gear or entering future marathons all around Europe.

Saturday afternoon and evening were spent wandering around Florence and finding pasta (a challenge in Italy, as I am sure you can appreciate!) and beer to ensure that we were sufficiently carb loaded for the race on Sunday.



## How Richard Pooley found himself running the Florence Marathon

A 6am alarm call on race day was followed by what breakfast we could get (and keep) down and a 45 minute walk to the start area. The race was due to start at 9.15 so arrival at the gathering point at 8.15 was a great way to get acclimatised and in the mood for what we were about to do! By the way, what should you eat before a marathon? Jack told me after I had shovelled it down, that cheese and cold meats are possibly not the most sensible things!

As, in the eyes of the organisers, we were marathon virgins, we were positioned in the 6hr+ pen despite our predicted finish time of 4 hours. So sharpening of elbows commenced and we decided our plan would be to work our way through the runners in front to catch up and stay with the 4 hour pacesetter for the rest of the race. That, we thought, should bring us in comfortably ahead of our target of 4 hours.



the warmth of our fellow runners who numbered over 10,000. But sunny weather was forecast and indeed, for most of the race, we ran in temperatures of 8 degrees and full sunshine.

As you would expect from a big city marathon, the organisation was fantastic. Drinks (water, salts, hot lemon tea) every 5k, sponges shortly after each drinks



station. From 15k, fruit at each drinks station, then cake was added to the menu from 30k onwards. With that much food and drink available it was easy to forget you were meant to be running a marathon! I stuck to the hot lemon tea and the gels I had got used to consuming on my training runs.

The first 5k was slow as we fought our way through the crowds but from thereon in, our plan of running around 5.30 per km was maintained until 35k. At 30k I suggested that as Jack was going so well, he should go ahead and this he did. Running over that distance with a buddy, I have discovered, is a good idea, if only to keep the pace right and keep you in the zone so this was the first mental spanner in the works. With his storming ahead, I lost both my timekeeper and my mental crutch but, the impact wasn't really felt until 35k when the mental doubts crept in. My time for the last 7k dropped to just under 6mins per km.

Fortunately, the plan of staying with the 4 hour pacesetters worked and I crossed the finish line in 3:56:56; over 50 minutes quicker than my previous nightmare. Jack clearly upped his pace in the last 12k and came in with a time of 3:50:11.

So, with medals collected and round our necks, we made our way slowly back to the hotel for a shower, happy to have achieved our goal. (I didn't dare have a bath as I thought I might not be able to get out once in!)

It took me 5 years of running with the Harriers to build the confidence to run a marathon again and to bury the nightmare of my previous performance. I have to say that, although they may not realise it, without the help of Ken, Jenny, Mark and Chris, plus the various people who have to put up with me running with them on Harriers nights, I wouldn't have got there. Running with a group and being able to share experiences makes training so much more enjoyable.

Would I do it all again? Well actually I don't have a choice as shortly after entering Florence I got confirmation that I had a ballot place for London. Now I know how I felt after Italy and how much I had left in the tank so it has given me a pretty good idea of where I need to put the work in for next time. So a new target has been set and training started.

So, I can retire from marathon running after London - or can I?

Saluti.

# Last of the summer wine

Christmas bash at the Bankers Draft, December 2015

Now you may have seen some of these self-appointed 'Old Codgers' (whose combined age is a staggering 650 years!!!!) around the club and newer members will probably have no idea of who they are or be aware of their achievements. As 2016 marks the club's 31 year anniversary, now seems an appropriate time to redress the balance.



Left to Right: John Cheetham, Larry Corkrey, Bill Tallentire, Stan Morgan, Bill Khinda, Jim Hendry, Richard Hales, Norman Beckwith, Mike Devonshire

Name	Joined club	Best marathon time	Best half marathon time	Best 10 mile time	Comments
John Cheetham	1985	3:05	1:24	61 mins	Still runs a little and bikes with BRCC.
Larry Corkrey	1985 – 1988 Rejoined 2002	3:20	1:26	1:07	Left club in 1988 to work in Saudi Arabia. Has had two full knee replacements but still runs and has many club best times. Does 3 spinning classes per week.
Bill Tallentire	1985	3:07	1:24	1:04	Has had two knee replacements but still runs. Does 2 gym sessions per week. Bikes when weather permits.
Stan Morgan	1985	3:18	1:27		Ran first London Marathon (1981). Has had two knee replacements. Now plays golf 2-3 times per week. Was club chairman for a short time.
Bill Khinda	2005				Definitely the newby of the group. Club photographer. Runs and bikes.
Mike Devonshire					Spent time as chairman of club. Now rows at Star Rowing Club
Norman Beckwith	1985	3:09	1:20	60 mins	Committee member for a number of years. Designed club logo.
Jim Hendry	2000		2:00		Achieved new age-related club best times.
Richard Hales	1993	1:58	1:28		Manager at many races. Organised Cranfield 5 for many years. Had a reputation for being firm with competitors who got out of line. Now spends time looking after horses and grandchildren. *see Richard's account top right

\*One of the first road races I did (May 1992, before I'd ever heard of the Harriers) was the Canvin International 10k at Cranfield Uni to raise funds for 'the Scanner Appeal'. My time 58:14! That's me then in the photo!

Having got the running bug, I joined the Harriers and was running up to 10 miles - Henlow in Nov-1993 (88:00). But lots of Harriers know me as the one who collapsed at the end of the Colworth Challenge in 2003 (followed by a brisk transfer to Bedford A&E, where treatment consisted of rest & lots of orange cordial!) - my times, by the way, were 38:52 for the Five Mile, 01:11:15 for the Trail Race (eight miles), and 01:58:11 for the half - my it was hot that weekend!

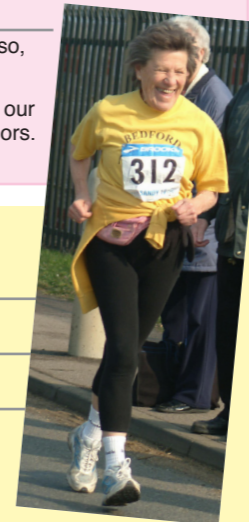
At Cranfield Uni I was results manager for the 5k held annually - Bill Tallentire & Doug & Larry had to work out how to record the big bunch of runners at the end of a short fast sprint, without any chips or computers, just paper & pencil! I was Race Director for the Cranfield Five from 2004 onwards, with the support of Mike Dev & Marlene.

I ran the Silverstone Grand Prix for a couple of years but really it was too fast for me! In Oct-2010 I did the Brussels Half - my one and only race on foreign soil - time 2:01:51 but I really enjoyed being part of such a large event in such a big city! And I even had the energy to pick up the pace over the last mile! That was my high note!

### Editor's note:

I realise this list is nowhere-near-complete so, apologies to those not included.

However, we couldn't allow the omission of our wonderful Iva Barr from any list of club seniors. So below are a few details about her.



Age	88
Name	Iva Barr
Joined club	1982

Best marathon time	3:48
Best half marathon time	1:44
Best 10 mile time	1:20

Ran first London Marathon (1982) in a pair of plimsoles and vowed never to do another one.

- Has run 30 marathons to date, and still counting.
  - Ran the original Athens marathon route.
  - Has won 'Pride of Bedford' award.
  - Was a torch bearer in Bedford for the Olympic games.
  - Received 'Point of Light' award from the PM.
- 
- Has raised thousands of pounds fundraising for 'Whizz Kidz'.
- 
- Holds club records for all distances for 70, 75, 80 and 85 age groups.
- 
- An inspiration to all.



# I DARE YOU!

Ian Kingstone challenges you to 'The Grizzly'



The Grizzly, in Seaton, Devon, has now become an important fixture for a growing number of Harriers. It takes place in March and is around 20 miles of rather special cross-country running, although there is an alternative 'cub' of 8 miles.

In September everyone starts getting the jitters as the ballot entries come out online. We usually enter as a group and training starts in November and, with plenty of cross country races to enter, you'll be pleased to hear that there's no time to clean your shoes all winter. By March we're thoroughly in the groove to face the challenge ahead.

The race itself starts on Seaton seafront then onto the beach - running on pebbles is the most energy-sapping activity your legs will ever experience! - back along the seafront and on to the first hill of many. The next milestone is the village of Beer (some take this more literally than others and have been known to grab a pint before continuing), and onto Branscombe beach where the cub and full-distance runners split. An ice-cold shock to the system is provided as you cross a gully that cuts across the beach and runs into the sea.

From this point on, the hills are thrown at you one after another, as you twist and turn through farm fields, woods and the famous bog; 200 yards of gloop that pulls your trainers off as you try to move forward through it.

At last, back to Branscombe beach, back across the gully and then an energy-sapping mile or so across the shingle to the stairway to heaven; half a mile of cliff with steps cut into the path. At the top, those who suffer from vertigo, are well-advised not to look down as there is not much between you and the beach below, but at least the organisers have now enlisted the help of the mountain rescue team to help over the last few yards. Here you rejoin the coastal path and in the distance, Seaton, and the finish line, come into view. However, there are still about four miles to go and often cramp can catch you out around this point and you'll see many runners stopping to stretch their calf muscles on any available post whilst other runners urge them to carry on to the finish line. However, this is not the only source of motivation. All over the course the organisers put up signs such as or 'Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional' or 'There's a door in the wall'. Nearing the end of the race you may have the distinct impression that there might be a door but it's locked and some joker forgot to leave the key!



On through the caravan park, back into Beer and the last couple of hills. You can hear the Tannoy calling out the names of the finishers as they run through. Now you know if you can just hang on, you can finish this gruelling event. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other - a mile or so to go. They say twenty miles, but the word 'ISH' has been used on many occasions as each year they change the course slightly.

The finish! At last the job is done and time to celebrate. The Harriers meet up at the finish line, get showered down by the firemen waiting with their hoses and ice cold water. You are rewarded with a very nice, collectable t-shirt, and then it's off to the pub.

The evening is spent celebrating our achievements usually by consuming vast amounts of food and, for those so inclined, alcohol.

I have competed the Grizzly nine or ten times now along with many of the other Harriers, including Iva who has done the Grizzly once and the cub many times.

So next September, put your name down - **if you dare!**



# The loneliness of the long-distance runner

Sarah Wanden recounts her experience of the Peddars Way Ultra

Peddars Way is a Roman road that stretches from Thetford all the way to the beach at Hunstanton. The race itself is a total of 48 miles and it's unmanned but, mainly straight, so not that difficult, even for me. I ran the inaugural event last year when there were just 50 entrants. This year it was open to 100 runners, with a t-shirt and a fab new medal on offer and the organisers had tweaked the course slightly so it promised to be a bit better. Intrigued, I entered at the last minute forgetting how hard it had been the previous year and that it had taken days before I could walk properly again yet alone run... why do we do that?

The competitors met at 6am in Hunstanton and boarded the bus provided back to the start at Thetford. It was nice to see a few familiar faces and some of us chatted quietly while others snoozed. Soon we were at the start which was in a pretty forest setting at Knettishall Heath where a light snowfall had begun.

I went off fairly fast and after about 10k settled into a slower pace. At 12 miles we reached the first checkpoint. My mind wasn't happy; lots of negative thoughts. In fact, I was trying to work out why I was even there taking on such a long distance. I tried to push these thoughts away but it was difficult. As we pushed on towards the next checkpoint at Castle Acre the sky began to look heavy with snow. The wind had also picked up and I was contemplating quitting. My time was slow so I couldn't imagine I was going to get through this within the 12 hour cut-off and I thought of another million reasons why I should stop; I just wanted it to be over. I told myself that if I reached Castle Acre it was 27 miles and therefore an ultra so I could stop with my pride intact and sod the medal. I'd even written the DNF blog in my head.

As I arrived at the checkpoint it had begun to snow heavily and I approached a marshal and told her I was quitting. She took my number and I entered the aid station (in a pub). With hot soup in hand I was shocked to see so many runners there. Apparently, I wasn't the only one making slow time; there were frozen individuals everywhere, some of them young chaps who I really thought would have been long gone. After a quick chat with the race organiser Kevin, I was assured that even if I walked fast I'd almost certainly make the cut-off. I had some warmer kit in my backpack so changed into that, ate some more food, had a coffee and retracted my race cancellation.

A young girl called Mel offered to accompany me for the rest of the run, so we set off. Mel was wearing shorts and it was snowing. She seemed fine despite the bright pink legs. We set off at a gentle jog and, as we progressed further, the weather deteriorated at an alarming rate; it was snowing heavily, there were high winds and very difficult wet and uneven terrain. We tried hard to keep each other motivated but it was difficult. Mel's legs had now become even brighter pink and I was wondering what on earth I was even doing there; it was desolate. Our only consolation was that we had the support of each other. My phone battery had long



since died and the backup device I had bought also failed. As we approached the last checkpoint at mile 35, I gratefully accepted a cup of tea. My fingers wouldn't work, my gloves were soaked and, despite 4 layers of clothes, I was cold. Mel's partner was there with dry kit for her so I waited while she changed. The longer I waited, the colder I got. Finally she appeared but it wasn't good; she was shaking violently and her face was ghostly pale. The marshals stopped her and sat her in a car with a hot drink, refusing to let her go on. As she had come so far and with only 12 miles (!!!) left, she was visibly upset. This made me even more determined to see it through to the bitter end.

I set off alone but soon saw a couple of fast walkers in the distance. I ran as fast as I could to catch them, desperately not wanting to spend time alone. Turns out this was the best decision I had made all day. Tina and Roger had buddied-up earlier and I asked to join them. Tina explained they had a 'fast walk' strategy and I was welcome if I could keep up. At this point anything was fine so I fell into step to grind out the last few miles. The snow turned to hail, the wind picked up speed across the barren fenland, I fought more negative feelings and tried to have warm thoughts. I caught myself shivering and my breathing was erratic - I think at this point I was heading into a dangerous place. Recognising this, I flapped my arms and increased my pace as I couldn't afford for my core to get cold. We marched on into the slowly darkening distance. Soon we needed head torches which meant we had to stop to get them out of our kit bags. This was a huge effort which carried the risk of getting even colder. I couldn't find the torch but, thank heavens, Roger found his and it was super powerful. On we went, chatting sometimes and at oth-



ers, there were long, but not uncomfortable, silences. Tina's Garmin died so we were left guessing how far we had left to go. Roger produced jelly babies for which we were eternally grateful. Those last 12 miles felt like a lifetime. Finally we got to the end of a very muddy descent to arrive at Beach Road. We cheered as we knew we had just a mile or so to go.

Arriving at Hunstanton beach we were instructed to take a page from a book hanging there (by way of proving you had reached the very end of Peddars Way) and then proceed to the village hall. Once at the hall we were greeted by an army of marshals who were busy heating up chilli, making tea and handing out medals.

**Wow, we had done it.**

I can honestly say that this was the toughest event yet in my short running career. Looking back now, I realise I wasn't well-equipped or organised enough for such brutal conditions. (My head torch was in my bag all along but we were so tired and confused we didn't spot it)

I have since heard that the potential winner pulled out of the race around a mile before the end as he was suffering so badly and the drop-out rate was 20/89.

Much respect to everyone that gave it a go, to the marshals who looked after us so well in arctic conditions, but mostly, to my fellow runners Mel, Tina and Roger for getting me round the course.

There's so much more I could say about this race but I've already gone on too long.

Peddars Way is an amazing route and, in better conditions, I would wholeheartedly recommend it, though maybe for the more seasoned ultra runner.



# Taming 'The Ox' and scaling 'The Wall' - 2015 and my journey into Ultra-running

by Ian Hammett



Having been regaled by several Harriers' glorious tales of rolling hills, quiet paths, and beautiful scenery, as well as lured by the promise of plentiful amounts of cake and tea, I decided that 2015 was to be the year that I tackled the world of Ultra running and boy, what an experience that proved to be!

I decided that I would sign up for 'Britain's most iconic Ultra' well that's how it's billed anyway.... 'The Wall'; 69 miles from Carlisle to Gateshead across Hadrian's Wall country, because if you're going to do something, then do it right. I mean why not sign up to run 69 miles across the country on trails and paths when the furthest you've gone before is 26.2 miles on lovely relatively flat tarmac? Immediately you can tell I would fit into the Ultra Runners club, as we are all slightly (very) mad!!

The recommended training plan on the race website advised that you try a 35 mile Ultra 4-5 weeks prior to attempting 'The Wall' so, conveniently, I discovered 'The Ox' which was a 35 mile run through the Wiltshire countryside exactly four weeks prior to my efforts in Carlisle. Perfect..... Sign me up!!

Fast forward to May 2015 and there I was, standing in the car park of the Rushmore estate nervously getting ready to run my first ultra-marathon surrounded by sheep and hardened campers who were slowly rousing after enjoying a pre-race evening on the locally brewed cider. To help me relax, my father and lead supporter, was consuming a bacon sandwich and telling me how good it tasted, whilst I ate an energy bar! Charming!!

Pensively, I joined the other competitors who had gathered for the race briefing; I had never been surrounded by so many compression socks, calf guards, backpacks, hydration bladders and race belts in all my life and wondered if, dressed in my Harriers vest and shorts, I was woefully under prepared for what lay ahead. After being told to be nice to the race marshals and not to pick any fights with combine harvesters, tractors or cows, we were off and running into the wilderness.

Being a total novice, I heeded the advice of my fellow Harriers to go off slowly and started towards the back of the field. I gradually picked off other runners politely saying 'Good morning' and trying not to think of the distance. I passed one guy who asked me if I was late and had missed the start which, at the time, made me laugh. Little did I know that he thought I was going far too quickly only 2 miles into the event.

The race turned out to be 37 miles in total, which was great when I'd planned for 35, but I am led to believe this is quite a common occurrence in Ultra events. Luckily, the course was fully signposted and didn't require self-navigation otherwise it could have turned into 40+ miles. Thankfully, despite a spectacular tumble after about 30 miles, and a near miss with a combine harvester at about 20 miles and the odd bits of walking, I managed to make it to the end in one piece. Somehow I arrived in second place and became only the second man to ever break 5hrs at the event. Unfortunately, the 1st man to break 5hrs, beat me by 3 minutes.

Surprisingly, after 37 miles, the prospect of running another 32 four weeks later didn't phase me and I could now turn my attention to conquering 'The Wall', although by 'conquer' I mean, get to the end before the cut-off time and not crash and burn halfway through. So, maybe 'scale the wall with dignity' would be a better description!!

So, there I was four weeks later at 6.30 in the morning, standing in the grounds of Carlisle castle surrounded by a crowd who were very similarly dressed to those at 'The Ox'. However, their expressions were very different. I was now joining a host of people who seemed to have woken up to the realisation of the task that lay ahead; a 69-mile-trip to Gateshead and, needless to say, I wasn't the only one who was apprehensive.



The clock ticked round to 7am and we were off along Hadrian's Wall path. Once again we started at a sedate pace in an attempt to ensure that we didn't all peak too soon. I remember watching the leaders disappear off into the distance thinking 'wow those guys are either super-fit or very silly' and unfortunately, for most of them, the latter proved to be the case. One chap even needed to stop for a sleep in a field after about 37 miles due to a bit of over-exertion and several others dropped out before halfway.

I ran with a great group of guys for a few miles and we chatted about running and things we had done. They all turned out to be far more experienced than I was, and had an impressive list of races between them, but that's what I love about these events; it's the camaraderie between runners, not about the time you do the race in. It's just about going the distance!

I made it to the halfway stage of the race, somehow in 4th place, where my Dad was waiting for me, along with my brother and nephew who had made the long trip from Hereford to surprise me. Seeing them all really gave me a lift and I set off for the second half of the race with renewed vigour... well, if you can call strolling out of the aid station munching on a ham roll followed by a bit of banana cake 'renewed vigour'.

I passed the next two runners within a mile of the aid station and, with the leader seemingly light-years ahead, I accepted the fact that I would now be running what was left of the route, mostly on my own. I hoped that other runners would catch me so I could chat to them and, never in a million years, imagined I could maintain second place. Surely I had gone off too quickly and it was only a matter of time before I was caught by someone?

However, the miles passed by and my legs kept ticking over until, at 50 miles, I saw the lead runner about 400m ahead and realised, to my astonishment, I was catching him. At about 54 miles I finally caught up with him, had a little chat, and then eased away from him. It was now a 15-mile race between the two of us to the finish.

It was time to dig deep and with about 5 miles to go it dawned on me that I was about to achieve something amazing. Not only was I within touching distance of running 69 miles, but I was also in 1st place and, more importantly, my nephew was going to see me cross the finish line, as were my dad and brother. I think only fellow runners will relate to that euphoric feeling of achieving your goal whether it be 5km or 100km, and this goal was beyond my wildest dreams.

So, after having left Carlisle at 07:00, there I was on the last mile having to weave in and out of tourists, shoppers and pedestrians (not what you need on tired legs). I crossed the finish line on Gateshead quayside at 16:43 to claim the honour of not only scaling 'The Wall' but winning it and breaking the course record. What a fantastic journey it had been... Truly, I was now an Ultra Runner!!

Still, even now, I can't quite believe what I achieved in 2015, and have since turned my sights towards new challenges for 2016... I won't say what they are for now, but those of you who know me best, already have some idea. For the rest of you, keep an eye on this magazine next year... who knows what 2016 will bring?...

**Happy running everybody!!**





# Represent team GB? Who? Me?

Chris Capps recounts his experience of the European Duathlon Championships

Standard Distance in Alcobendas, Spain, 26 April 2015.

**When I joined Bedford Harriers in 2001, I could never have imagined that I would represent Great Britain in any athletic discipline. In 2015, I did and here is my story.**

In April 2014, after much thought and deliberation, I bought myself a good quality road bike, and when making the purchase I was asked what I was going to use it for 'racing, triathlon or what?' Not really having thought that far ahead, I nonchalantly replied 'I fancy doing some duathlons'. Many a true word spoken in jest, as they say.

So raring to go with my new road bike, I started to cycle regularly, mixing this with running and gradually going further and further on long rides and trying to increase my speed on the shorter rides. I decided to enter 3 duathlons during late summer of 2014. However, due to circumstances beyond my control, I found myself at Althorp in October competing in my first duathlon and, as it happened, it was a European qualifier. For those who don't know what duathlon is, it's a run-bike-run event and, like triathlon, is run under the auspices of the British Triathlon Federation (BTF) who are members of the European Triathlon Union (ETU) and the international Triathlon Union (ITU) and maybe more.

BTF encourage athletes to enter qualifiers for European and World competitions at duathlon, triathlon and aquathlon at various distances. Entrants qualify in their age group and compete against those in the same age bracket. The only criteria are that you have to be a member of BTF and you need register your interest in qualifying as well as entering the allotted qualification events. Bedford Harriers has had many athletes qualify, represent GB and been either European or World age-group champions.

On the morning of the race I made my way, far too early, to Althorp and, believe it or not, the morning after our circuits with Regiment Fitness. Great preparation! Anyway, I completed the 10k run, 40k cycle and 5k run in just over 3 hours and, to my surprise, finished in the top 3 of my age group; I had qualified to represent GB in Europe in 2015 and had to decide if I wanted to take up the offer.

Let's be clear, representing GB is not cheap. Everything is funded and paid for by the competitor, including event entry, flights, kit, hotels, insurance, cost of bike transfer, food, drink, etc, etc but, how often would I get such a chance? I jumped at the opportunity. I should also mention that Nora Haggart had also qualified for her age group.

So, how do you train for a duathlon taking place in Spain in 6 months time? Well, I did what I thought was right for me which was starting with alternate days of running and cycling, when work allowed. The running consisted of mainly 10ks on different terrains around north Beds, whilst the cycling varied between 12, 18 or 24 mile hill loops with the odd 24 mile out and back thrown in. I also included a spin session and our circuits as my 'recovery day'. Brick sessions (running off the bike) were also included; often just a mile or so, but important nevertheless.

As the months rolled by, I started to run and cycle every day that I was able. Consequently, on Harriers training nights, I had often done anything up to 24 miles cycle before our group run session, and it showed; I really struggled to keep up with my group. However, over time, things got better; my race pace and stamina improved and, slowly but surely, I was getting stronger and fitter.

Finally, my weekend in Spain arrived and I flew out on the early Friday flight to Madrid. My bike had been transported by road beforehand and was there when I arrived ready to be stored in my hotel room.



Friday consisted of getting acclimatized, registering and, in the late afternoon, the opportunity to cycle the route with other GB competitors. It proved to be a hilly and testing course with a number of roundabouts and fast descents (I should have worked as hard at the descents in training as I had with the hill climbs). Saturday was the GB team briefing with all the other GB standard event competitors (over 400) and photographs. The forecast for the Sunday was cool with wind and rain but how bad could April in Spain be? – Actually, a lot nastier than I thought.

I did not sleep well on the Saturday night and was awake early for breakfast (2 pots of porridge and no idea what else I ate). My bike had been taken to the start on the Saturday evening so all I needed were things for the race; trainers, cycle shoes, helmet, gels. It had rained most of the night and was cooler than expected and I had not brought the right underclothes or waterproofs; a salutary lesson.

The sprint races set off first; the weather was as had been predicted i.e. not good. Because of the conditions, there were a number of casualties in the GB team; mostly gravel cuts and damage to bike. Nothing too serious, thank goodness.

By the time the standard races got to my age group, the rain had eased off and we crossed our fingers hoping it would brighten up. And then we were off on the 4 times 2.5km run on a hilly course. As I got to transition 1, the rain started again and the wind got up making the cycle 'interesting'. It was a 4 times 10k course, which was quite exposed in some areas. I was soon wet through and getting quite cold; I was desperately in need of those additional layers left at home. A quick risk assessment told me to keep the speed down and take roundabouts carefully and work on the inclines. This I did and eventually I completed my 4 laps, but not before Nora whizzed past me. Considering she started a good 10 minutes after me it was a brilliant performance by her.

Into transition 2 and out again. The rain was lighter on the last 2 run laps and finally I crossed the finish line tired and cold but, I had done it and had come 6th in my age group in Europe.

After a well-earned shower and food, I went to the medal ceremony where it became clear that quite a few people had pulled out because of the cold or because they had fallen off their bikes. This made me feel really pleased that I had carried on. I was also happy I was able to cheer Nora who was European Champion in her age group so, very well done Nora!

Although participating is not cheap, I know that many other Harriers have competed in several of the triathlon and duathlon distances and I would thoroughly recommend others try it; I felt it was an absolute honour to represent GB on the international stage.

The unexpected results of my training regime have been that my weight has gone down by at least a stone, and I have achieved my gold age-graded award, some 13 years after gaining my bronze. I have also achieved 2 PBs in 2015; something I never thought possible.

As if all this wasn't excitement enough, I was nominated for Bedford Borough's Sports Personality of the Year 2015, and attended the awards night at the Corn Exchange in December 2015. I did not win but was grateful to have been nominated.

In the last eighteen months I have learned so much about duathlon, something Chris Proud, a former Harrier, excelled at and I intend doing more and trying to qualify not only for Europe but for the Worlds. Watch this space!!!

# From (almost) couch potato to World Ironman Championships

Nick Beardow's story



The UK Government recommends 20 mins. of out-breath-exercise 3 times per week. Back in the year 2000 at the age of 40 I was doing nothing. I was not a complete couch potato, but my exercise consisted of a few games of golf, the odd cycling holiday (Cycling for Softies) and the occasional long walk. I always played some sport and considered myself quite active, but I hated running. This was probably because on the odd occasion when I did run, I tore into the distance for about 200m, ran out of breath rapidly and stopped, wondering "how could anyone enjoy running?"

One sport I have always loved is skiing. I have skied for 30 years and am reasonably proficient. I used to ski one week every year, but by the end of the week I was so tired that I could barely make a turn and had stopped enjoying it. I was also not improving. So, at the start of 2001 I decided to get fit for skiing. I joined a gym in Olney and set about improving my fitness for six weeks before the next skiing holiday. My wife said "I don't know why you waste your money, because you know you will never keep it up". My fitness-to-ski programme comprised a 10 min. walk on the treadmill, 10 mins. on the rowing machine, a few strength exercises, etc. You get the drift... After about 3-4 weeks I plucked up the courage to increase the speed on the treadmill to a gentle jog (about 8km/h). That's where I was in 2001. But it worked. That year I skied hard all week, didn't feel so tired and enjoyed it.

Encouraged by this, I kept going to the gym and worked on a summer cycling programme, so that I would be fitter for my next 'Cycling for Softies' holiday with the family. That summer one of my neighbours commented upon having seen me cycling around a local route (10.7km) and I felt proud. I didn't tell him that I stopped half way round to drink, catch my breath and rest. I felt deflated when he said he ran the route quite regularly. Run! How can anyone run 10.7km? But it set me wondering...

I travel a lot on business, and would usually walk a bit and explore the local area where I am staying. I started packing some running shoes, a T-shirt and shorts, and would gently jog instead of walking. A year or two later, I was on a training course about fulfilling ambitions, being positive, how to achieve your ambitions, etc. You know the sort of thing. We were asked to name something that was way beyond our reach, but that we always dreamed of doing - e.g. go to the moon; become a professional footballer, win the lottery, etc. I wrote "run a marathon". I have no idea why, as I had had no such previous ambitions and had never given it a thought. At that stage I had not even entered any kind of running race; I just jogged for fitness. Around the same time, a friend had been suggesting that I do a triathlon, knowing that I jogged and cycled a bit. But I couldn't swim - at least I couldn't swim more than two lengths of the pool without stopping or resorting to breast stroke. However, this also set me thinking.

Jump ahead to 2005-2006. I don't remember exactly when, but I achieved something quite extraordinary. I ran the local 10.7km loop that I used to cycle. It was as if I had run a marathon. I couldn't quite believe it and was on a high for weeks. I probably didn't stop talking about it for days. It motivated me to do more and in 2007 I competed in my first ever running race - The Stevington 12K. I really enjoyed it, though it hurt like hell. This is the problem with being competitive, which I have always been. The achievement was even greater because I overtook a Bedford Harrier (though I won't mention who). This was one of the first times I had heard of Bedford Harriers, though I guessed that it was an elite running club full of finely tuned athletes probably completing for places in the Olympic Games.

Later that year I also did my first mini-triathlon on a mountain bike. What changed my view about triathlon was seeing men and women,



clearly older and larger than me, swimming breaststroke in one of the Bedford pool sprint triathlons. I thought "if they can do it, surely so can I". So I entered, just about survived the swim, and enjoyed it. So what next?

I knew Angie Kay, because our sons are friends. She used to encourage me and even recommended my buying a Garmin. This was great: much better than measuring the distance I had run by driving around in the car. She also mentioned Bedford Harriers, though I was still sure this was for elite athletes only and not for a part time jogger like me. But one day I read that running on the track was a good way to improve fitness and speed, so I became a member - just so I could use the track. I joined one of the evening sessions and enjoyed it, though I used to turn up only occasionally - time and travel commitments precluded my coming more often. Ironically, it was a good 3-4 years later before I finally did a track session - something I still need to commit to more regularly.

What I liked about Bedford Harriers was the camaraderie, the encouragement from everyone, the opportunity to push myself beyond what I thought I was capable of and the structure of the training. Back then I never did interval sessions, whereas now it is part of my staple diet.

In 2008 I signed up for the London Marathon, though I pulled out as I had not done enough training during the winter. I entered New York instead, as it falls in November and would allow me to train all summer. My target was 4 hours and I missed it by 50 seconds. Damn! It meant I would have to do another. In truth I had enjoyed it, especially the atmosphere of a big city race. I failed to break 4 hours again the following year in Berlin, but I was even more determined. I finally cracked it at my fourth attempt in 2011 in Poznan, Poland. "That's it", I thought, "time to retire". I am sure this is what my family hoped, but I was not quite done yet. In the euphoria of going under 4 hours, and in a moment of madness, I signed up for Ironman Zürich. My wife and daughter told me I was "a silly old fool" (or words to that effect) and that I was too old and fat. I am sure they thought I would kill myself.

They were right about one thing; I was too heavy, so I determined to lose 10kg in the first six months of 2012. I do have a strong will, so I cut out the crisps, chocolates, cakes, sweets, biscuits, second helpings, and most other pleasures in life. I even cut down, though not out, alcohol.

But if I was going to do this Ironman thing properly, I needed a much more structured training programme, so I started coming to Bedford Harriers sessions more regularly, though still not as often as I would have liked. Bedford Harriers fully supports triathlon, even though it is essentially a running club. I am still learning the opportunities that exist for triathlon within the club, with Saturday morning coached swimming sessions, group rides and a large participation in many of the main triathlon events. In 2011 I had done one middle distance event (The Cow Man in Emberton) and swore "never again". I couldn't eat for days afterwards. But this time I had trained smarter with the Harriers, lost weight and was ready for the new challenge. In the end I survived Ironman Zürich and really enjoyed it. I didn't keel over, much to the relief of my daughter, and couldn't wait for the next one.

I have now completed 6 Ironman races (3 in 2015) and numerous middle distance events. At the start of 2015, my ambitions had extended to thoughts of the World Ironman Championships in Hawaii. It was a bit of long shot, but I didn't think it was impossible - one day at least. I was no longer a novice, so if I picked the right event and got lucky, maybe... just maybe...! In the end, thanks to good fortune with the roll down, I qualified for Kona and had the experience of my life. I am proud to have followed in the footsteps of fellow Harriers, Gill Fullen, who has been a great inspiration to me, Nora Haggart and Eva Kovacs. I won't repeat what I have previously written about my time in Kona, save to say that I definitely want to go back and am willing to train even harder to achieve this goal.

So, what next? Since joining Bedford Harriers I have made huge progress and am now thinking of podium places at triathlons, have qualified for GB Age-Group standard and middle distance teams, and I have qualified for Ironman and 70.3 World Championships. I have now completed 7 marathons and one ultra marathon (The Comrades in South Africa in 2014). The structured training sessions, the coaching and the support from fellow Harriers have made all the difference. Worryingly, progress is slowing now. Perhaps it is age related (I am 56 in February), or maybe I am close to reaching the limit of my capabilities. I hope not. But how much longer do I have to keep improving? Maybe my goals will change with time. At Kona in 2015, an 85-year-old man attempted to be the first in this age category to complete the Ironman World Championships within the time limit of 17 hours. He failed, but just to get there is an achievement in itself. This kind of thing motivates me, so I am not giving up just yet.

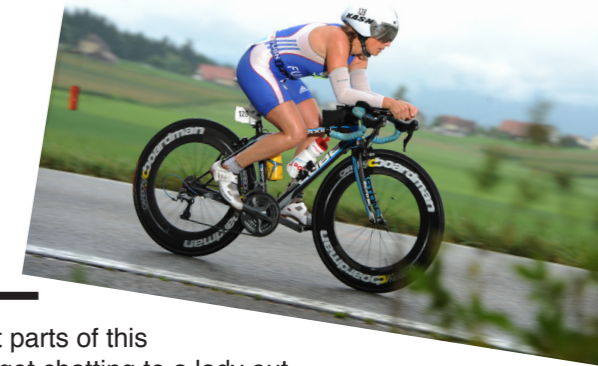
I have been inspired by so many people at the club that I want to keep on improving and competing. It is not the elite club that I had imagined and it has helped me hugely. I would love to be able to encourage others to achieve their best too. I still can't quite believe that I have run a marathon, let alone some of the other stuff. I frequently say that if I can do it, anyone can. I was close to being a couch potato, and now I aim to train 10-15 hours per week (though it doesn't always happen).

So what does a former couch potato plan for 2016 - injuries and illnesses withstanding? Boston Marathon, two more Ironman races (Nice and Barcelona), various half marathons, two or three middle distance races, including the European Championships in Walchsee, Austria and lots more running, swimming and cycling training sessions with Bedford Harriers. Actually, what I really want to do is to stay healthy and enjoy. The odd PB would be nice too...

Nick

# Foreign Adventures

Gill Fullen describes the unexpected benefits of competing abroad



Over the past 5 years, tri and duathlon have enabled me to travel to many amazing places to compete. Each race is memorable for different reasons, some to do with the race, some the other competitors, some for the organisation, some the after party or the venue.

I like European races as they are generally fairly easy to get to. However, the worst journey so far, (with the exception of a little dodgy driving on the way out to IM Nice, you know who you are), has undoubtedly been to Horst in The Netherlands where, despite it being probably the closest of the lot, the traffic was so bad that it doubled the predicted travel time.



Our first issue was fitting an extra bike onto the rack when Jen couldn't decide whether to take her road or tt - so we took both. Then, an emergency wee stop to avert an in-car flood disaster in torrential rain on the way to the Chunnel contributed to Helen Woolley, Jen Moffat and I missing the ferry. Endless quiz games helped to while away the hours crawling along motorways but, the main game played was 'beat the SatNav', which we failed pretty badly at. The Burrells were in a car in front of us, also struggling with horrendous Dutch traffic jams and sending us updates of the highs and lows of their route. Luckily, once we arrived, it was all worth it as I had a great race and we all enjoyed a fantastic Harriers' road trip.

The longest journey was this past year's 48 hours to Adelaide in Australia, where our 12 hour stopover in Singapore resulted in hugely swollen hands and feet from walking all day in the heat. We arrived in Adelaide to what seemed like a ghost town, when we had been expecting big city bustle, but eventually realised we had arrived on Sunday, not Monday, as I had thought! The journey to Hawaii was stressful, having to clear US customs with baggage and bike box in San Francisco within a tight connection time before we began the cramped, uncomfortable flight to Kona. We arrived in the special, deepest dark and heat of Hawaiian nights after 23 hours travelling, tired and hungry with nowhere open to find food. That was a real low point, but mum and I did make it through to the morning where the stunning view of the island completely swept us off our feet and made every moment of the journey worthwhile. In fact the fantastic climate and the incredible atmosphere impressed us so much that I went back two years later and another trip is still hugely tempting.



The most memorable parts (sadly) of the foreign races are often the officially organised entertainments. I have endured much very poor rapping, dubious African (not

tribal singing, French celebrity singer impersonations, (blank looks all round) and loads of dodgy dancing. The Hawaiian fire dancers were pretty impressive though providing, without doubt, the best pre-race festivities of the lot. The Australians had a pretty cool covers band and the

Spanish after-race band in Pontevedra was out of this world – somewhere along the lines of Cirque du Soleil crossed with Madness! They were fantastic as they leaped, dangled and cavorted about on a massive portable stage with incredible abandon, whilst playing and singing brilliantly.

The prize for the most awful freebies, I hate to say, goes to the duathlon Worlds in Nancy. The organisers decided that it would be a great gimmick to provide a

plain black cotton T shirt in one size only with a square strip of Velcro on the front. To this you were supposed to attach a race-specific patch, which, as you collected more, you could switch around to suit the occasion. So, you collected one patch with the t-shirt and then as you came over the finish line you were presented with an alternative patch. Great idea? Awful idea; from the ill-fitting T-shirt to the non-stick properties of the Velcro and the size difference between the patch and the Velcro strip on the T-shirt. In addition to this, the bag they gave out was a black handbag (the men looked great clutching them) with the slogan **I ♥ Nancy**. Original, but barely appropriate. Richard Piron so enjoys being reminded of this fabulous haul of momentos with his iconic photo.



The very first international race I ever attended in Vegas held the bitterest disappointment as well as one of the best high points. Having trained for long distance triathlon, including a 4k swim, the fact that torrential rain flooded the venue the day before the race and then snow fell (isn't there a song about that) the night before, led to freezing and



unhealthy conditions for the swim. We had no inkling of this until, wetsuit clad and in the dark, we started to walk to the start in the morning, only to be met by the wailing and gnashing of teeth of vast numbers of very confused triathletes.



Rumours abounded from the swim having been called off, to the whole race being cancelled. After hours of confusion and conflicting information, the race turned into a time trial on the bike followed by the planned run. Having trained long and hard on improving the swim, especially for this race, it was a bitter disappointment, especially having travelled so far to compete.

Of course, coming over the finish line after a great bike and run through the incredible Nevada scenery and finding myself in second place to a lady I had idolised, and thereby winning my first ever ITU medal, somewhat made up for the disappointment of the non-existent swim. I was ridiculously emotional, tearfully hugging anyone who came near and having to apologise for some time afterwards.



In terms of great venues and races I still think Powerman Zofingen is hard to beat. The beautiful Swiss countryside of green mountains, traditional wooden chalets and friendly locals made for a very pleasant place to visit. The race was brilliantly well-organised, based at a sports stadium with all the facilities on site. I rec'd the run course with the German team, having realised that I knew some of the athletes and the team manager from previous races; another example of friendly international relations. In hindsight, this is something they may have regretted when I later ran past the other German age-groupers! The course is brutal; extremely steep uphill and downhill on stony tracks, through wooded mountainside. A 10k run on this, followed by a 150k bike with some serious climbs and all followed with a further 30k run over the same terrain. Tough in the extreme, but I absolutely loved it!



One of the best parts of this stay was that I got chatting to a lady out on the bike course on her mountain bike. She looked a bit lost so I stopped to make sure she was ok. It turns out she was Belgian and we didn't really have a common language but, between us we worked out that her son was competing in the race and was one of the favourites. It turned out later that she was



staying in our hotel with the rest of her family, so we kept meeting up during the few days pre-race. On race day it was fabulous to be running on a rough track half way up a Swiss mountain in the middle of nowhere, turn a corner and suddenly be cheered on by an enthusiastic Belgian contingent. They were obviously there to support their son, but I was now included in their party. At the post race medal ceremony, we were rather late getting into town and were standing searching, without much hope, for empty seats in the hall whilst clutching our full plates of pasta. Suddenly, a "woo hoo" rang out and, amidst much waving, we were invited to sit at the front with our new Belgian friends. Best of all, their son had won the race so they were over the moon and we were generously included in their celebrations. What a great experience. This is definitely one of the major draws of international racing; the people are just so amazing and inclusive.

In the end, it's not just the hope of a medal but the whole experience of competing in far-flung places that keeps me hooked and wanting to do more. Races are often at venues you would never normally choose to visit, let alone holiday in but, once there, you are free to discover what is often a more real side of life than the sanitized version so often on show to tourists in that country. Despite the intense hype in the GB squad about being there to beat the other nations, in fact for me, competing abroad has served more as a way of breaking down international barriers. When you're racing you are sharing the same experience, which becomes a common bond and brings athletes of all ages, abilities and nationalities together. This surely must be something worth celebrating and promoting in our world today.

# Collar Works corruptions!

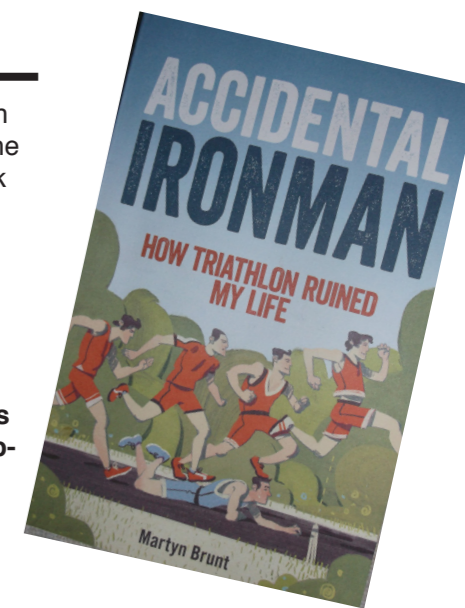
By Billy Fadden

Name all Bedford Harriers in the pictures and win a chance to be the next victim of Billy's - Collar Works corruptions!  
You'll find Billy at the Awards Night behind the camera in the photobooth!



# Book review:

## Accidental Ironman, by Martyn Brunt



As I've been consigned to the benches this year, the closest contact I've actually had with sport is reading about it. Though, at first glance, I thought this was yet another diary of the journey from slob to amazingly fit super hero, it was in fact a refreshingly tongue-in-cheek account of the world of triathlon with some irreverent observations of those, including the author, who take part.

The following post-race commentaries might give you something of the flavour of the book and, hopefully, a smile.

What we say:

**I finished in the top 20 in my age group**

What it means

I finished 19th in my age group (out of twenty three) and 374th overall

What we say:

**(For the over 50's) I finished second in my age group**

What it means

There were two in my age group

What we say:

**Conditions were much harder than last year**

What it means

I was slower than last year

What we say:

**I was 5th fastest on the bike**

What it means

I am crap at running

What we say:

**I was third finisher from my club**

What it means

I finished 347th overall

What we say:

**I've been struggling with a cold all week**

What it means

I haven't trained hard enough

What we say:

**I overtook loads of people on the run**

What it means

I didn't try hard enough on the bike

What we say:

**There are lots of ex-elites here racing as age-groupers and those in the armed forces are basically full-time athletes**

What it means

I didn't qualify

What we say:

**If I'd been a couple of months older, I'd have finished in the top three in my age group**

What it means

I also didn't qualify

What we say:

**I did a course PB**

What it means

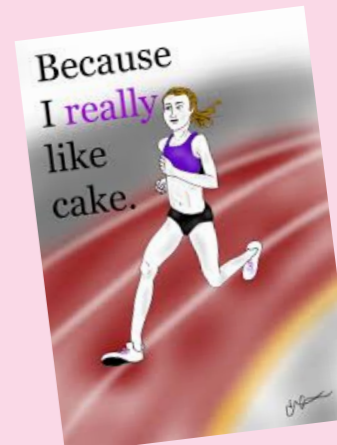
I've never raced here before

Now, be honest, do any of these sound familiar?

He then goes on to advise on pre-race T shirts; what they say about you and the best ones to wear to intimidate the opposition. The book culminates with a hilarious account of his fulfilling his goal namely, Ironman Roth – definitely worth a read just for this, particularly if you are contemplating doing it.

Definitely 5 stars.  
Lynne Greenard

When my Grandad was 65 he started running a mile a day to keep fit.  
He's 70 now and we have no idea where he is.



# And now for something completely different...

## Neil Lovesey's account of EVAC - Track and Field League 2015

Well, it's the start of a new year and as I look back at my results for last year, I never thought I would be musing over how I could improve my long jump or high jump technique when I am supposed to be a runner!

It all started when somebody came up with the bright idea of entering the EVAC (Eastern Vets Athletic Club) Track and Field League. As the title suggests, this league is open to athletes of a certain age (35 years or more for both men and women). All events are divided into age category competition. The region is divided into areas so that travelling is reduced with six clubs competing in each league. Four league matches are held over the summer period with the top two clubs going forward to compete in the regional final.

The first match clashed with the Silverstone 10km and we were unable to field a team, which came back to bite us in the final reckoning. The second match was held at Bedford. We were all a bit tentative about making our debut. Overall we finished in 6th place. The outstanding performance of the evening came from Gary Butler who ran 13:00 seconds in the 100m race to finish 2nd, without the aid of starting blocks. Gary then went on to race 58:60 seconds in the 400m race to claim another 2nd place. Anna Folland and Gill Fullen had great runs in the 1500m, both winning their races.



The third match was held at Biggleswade. We were beginning to find our feet a bit by now and were growing in confidence. We were now filling more places in the field events which was helping to boost our score. We finished this match in 3rd position. Gary Butler flew again, achieving another 2nd place in the 100m race as well as winning the 400m race. I managed to win the long jump which came as a big surprise as the last time I did this event was 44 years ago!! Gill Fullen destroyed the rest of the field in the 1 mile event winning by 57 seconds in a time of 5:34:25. Gill then went on to win the 300m hurdle with her unique 'technique' of running like the clappers between hurdles then somehow getting over them! It did the trick.



The fourth and final meet was again held at Bedford. By now, word was getting around the club about how much fun it was. We were now filling more slots as the momentum grew. We also had good support on the night as other club members came to cheer us on after they had finished their training sessions. Gill had a great night, winning both the 800m and 2000m races. Kirstie Meeten won her 2000m race by a huge margin. On the men's side, we managed to win the 4 x 200m relay. Kevin Willett and Andy Palombella both came 2nd in their 2000m races. I managed to win the high jump. We finished this match in 2nd place overall, beating Bedford and County into 3rd position by one point. Our ladies team all worked very hard covering most events with only eight athletes. This was an incredible result in our first season, especially as Bedford Harriers is traditionally a road running club and we were competing against some clubs which traditionally are more track and field oriented.



Overall, we finished the series in 6th position but if we hit the ground running this summer and competed in all four meetings so who knows what we can achieve in the future. I was skeptical at first about taking part in this series but, having competed, I am now a convert.

**So, what about it? Would you like to give it a go in 2016?**

**If you are interested, look out for information posted later in the year.**

