

**BEDFORD HARRIERS**



**Awards Edition**

# *On the Run*

January 2020



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## Editor's Welcome Jenny King

I am delighted to welcome you to this year's **On the Run**. Once again, you have contributed so many interesting and varied items about your 2019 experiences in running and multisport. We are so privileged to be able to enjoy our sport, to celebrate successes and to share our growth and development with each other. What a great club we are! I am proud to be a member.

Putting this magazine together requires a great deal of work, especially by Alastair Fadden, who has done another wonderful job - thank you Alastair. We need to keep to a tight deadline to be sure it's out on time for Awards Night, so please be thinking about writing up your 2020 adventures and make a note that the absolute deadline for next year's magazine will be a little earlier - Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Happy New Year to you

Jenny King

# TRIATHLON ALPE D'HUEZ: 23 - 26 JULY 2019

When somebody suggested a week's holiday in the Alps I jumped at the chance. Little did I know that the 'holiday' was an ill-disguised ruse for some 'swim bike run' malarkey. Not wanting to be left out I enthusiastically entered the duathlon and, at the beginning of July, I set off to Milton Keynes to buy a bike and a pair of fiddly clippy shoe thingies. A test bike ride later to the coffee shop in Kimbolton and I was set!

Arriving at the lovely chalet near the Alpe d'Huez resort Dea (Ditchfield) and I were met by the chief organisers Jenny and Simon (King) who had not only made the place ready but who had also provided tons of goodies including yummy home-made cake. We were later joined by Gill (Fullen) and Mel and Justin (Burrell).

The first event of the week was the duathlon on Tuesday 23rd - two modest runs with the Huez climb sandwiched in between. Emerging from the first transition it took me almost a mile to get the left clippy shoe thingie in place but mercifully just in time for the climb! My abiding memory is of other competitors overtaking me on foot as I ground my way to the top, petrified of unclipping! One shuffling run later and it was thankfully all over.

Thursday 25th saw the turn of Gill, Simon and Dea in the 'Long Tri'. The swim took place in Lac du Verney which was described in the blurb as 'crystal clear' and it did not disappoint. The 118 km bike ride and 3200 meters of climbing in stifling heat (at altitude) saw dozens of riders receiving medical attention. All three Harriers completed the bike leg brilliantly but sadly both Dea and Simon were just unable to make the final cut off time for the run. Gill put in another tremendous performance and finished 15th in the Female Pro category (Daniela Ryf winning).

Friday 26th was Jenny's turn in the "Short Tri". During the swim (which she hated) Jenny was spurred on by words of encouragement from Mel who scared the bejesus out of the rest of us in the process. Jenny stuck to the task in typical fashion and she put in a fabulous performance to complete the infamous Huez bike climb and the final run.

It was a superb week and grateful thanks go to Simon and Jenny for bringing things together. Stunning scenery. Good fun and great company.

By way of a PS, there are rumours of some well-meaning but perhaps ill-advised folk drumming up support for "Huez The Sequel" ..... !

Mervyn Harmon





# Doing the Tour

Not many have heard of The Tour of Milton Keynes which is amazing as this event has been held for 37 years. It went on my bucket list many years ago when I first started running whilst living and working in the area.

The event is organised by Marshall Milton Keynes Athletics Club and consists of 6 races of different distances held on 6 consecutive days at different venues across the city: on Redways, bridleways, track and woodland trails which in total add up to running a marathon, give or take a few metres. You can run as many or as few races as you want but just about everyone does the whole series. Well it would be rude not to!

**Day 1** – At 11k, this is the longest race of the whole series. A three lap slightly rolling course around Tattenhoe Park. It was a blisteringly hot August Sunday morning and it was brutal with each lap getting progressively slower. The dilemma is how hard to push day 1 with another 5 days racing ahead. Of course, we all ran it flat out and regretted it on the start line of Day 2. I think everyone was glad to see the finish line. I know I was.

**Day 2** – This was a 2.5 mile cross country run through Brickhill Woods. The surface was sandy with lots of tree roots and very similar terrain to Amphill Park but even more undulating.

**Day 3** – We were now doing the only accurately measured race. A one mile track race at Stantonbury Stadium. Five heats were held, each with twelve competitors. Runners were allocated their heat according to their overall standing after the first two races. The fastest male won in 4:33, the winning lady in 5:14, the slowest times 8:29 and 8:02 respectively. Quite a range of abilities demonstrating how inclusive this event is. I was very pleased with my 6:05 as a soon-to-be MV65.

**Day 4** – This was a 5mile, two lap trail run around Campbell Park, very close to CMK Shopping Centre. Very handy for pre-race food, drink and loos. Another undulating course that seemed to have more ups than downs! The lead bike took the lead runners slightly off route but that did not affect yours truly.

**Day 5** – Getting towards the end now and pleasantly surprised that my legs were not complaining too much. This was a 4.5 mile three-lap cross-country run around Teardrop Lakes. This course is used in The Chiltern League XC series, with a couple of short but very steep climbs and what felt like even steeper descents per lap. Some competitors were walking the climbs on the second and third laps. A lot of concentration was needed to stay on your feet when negotiating these.

**Day 6** – This last race was a 6.5 mile out and back flat route through Ouzel Valley Park with a lap of Willen Lake in the middle, starting and finishing at Woughton-on-the-Green Sports Pavilion. I mistakenly thought I was coping OK with racing every day but fatigue started to catch up with me during this final race. My legs were definitely talking to me for the last couple of miles. I was very relieved to cross the finish line and was glad it wasn't a seven day event. This run was followed by prize-giving in The Pavilion along with a very good buffet. Runners who completed the whole tour were given race memento tee shirts.

To sum this event up, if you want to race on accurately measured courses for your Strava stats and be rewarded with a nice piece of bling for each race, this is not for you. If, however you want to be part of a traditional, long-standing, stripped back event with some fairly demanding, scenic courses across Milton Keynes give it a go – I loved it!

**Neil Lovesey**



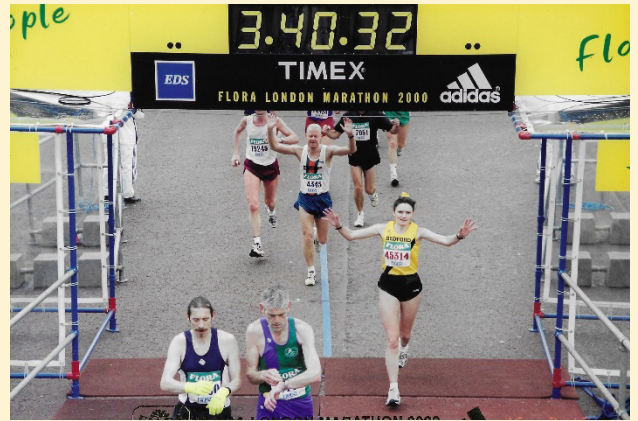




# ABBOTT WORLD MARATHON MAJORS: my route to the six star medal.

## 1. LONDON MARATHON (2000) 3:40:31

Like many Bedford Harriers I've actually done more than one London, but I chose the 2000 edition to submit my time as it was my fastest time there, as well as being the year that I passed Roger Black at about mile 23! The race was on a nice cool day and I saw the usual Harriers crew plus some family at The Grapes. I had been a Harrier for about 18 months by this point so the structured training paid off.



## 2. NEW YORK (2000) 4:06:56

This was also in 2000 and Neil and I decided to make this our honeymoon, along with about 16 other Bedford Harriers (ahem!!). It was cold, it was hard going on those bridges, but the finish in Central Park made it all worthwhile. It was probably the loudest marathon spectator crowd I've ever encountered.

## 3. CHICAGO (2013) 3:50:45

Fast forward to 2013 and another one that both Neil and I ran. I'd missed a load of training through injury so had only been running properly for about six weeks before the race. The race started at 7.30 am and it was warm. The wide streets wound round Chicago and I surprised myself with a cracking time. A great race, with cool, wet towels and free beer at the finish!





The Abbott World Marathon Majors is a series of races that culminate in a runner being awarded a serious bit of bling for completing all. It began in 2006 but you can also submit times from before that date for verification. When you have completed five of the six races and have an entry to the final one, you can submit your evidence and arrange to collect your medal on completion of the final one. The marathons can be done in any order. To date, there are 6,401 people who have done this. Here is my six star journey.



#### 4. BERLIN (2016) 4:04:32

It took me three attempts to do this one. Illness the first time and a pesky rabbit hole which crocked my ankle a few weeks before the race the second time meant that I was not going to miss it a third time. Berlin is flat and fast and if you are in good shape, definitely a PB course. My calf did a weird 'pop' at mile 25 so it was a sort of hop/jog for the last mile. Coming through the Brandenburg Gate just before the finish was fantastic.

#### 5. BOSTON (2017) 4:40:48

After Berlin, someone commented that I 'only' had two more to do for the six star. Getting into Boston is almost as difficult as the race itself as they have very strict qualifying criteria. After three attempts at getting the qualifying time. I made it and we were off to Boston. Neil did the 5km the day before the race. The marathon was on a really warm day. They bus you out to the start and you run back. Really wide streets with no shade meant that I pretty much just melted and was very glad to finish.



#### 6. TOKYO (2019) 4:31:32

Another tricky one to get a number for. I opted to go with a travel company who had their own ballot for their places. Luckily, I got one. The race was in early March and I came down with 'flu towards the end of January. Not good. However, it was all booked and paid for and the decision was made to do some training once the bug had gone and just do my best. It was a race like no other. They are really strict about you not taking your own drinks to the race, you have to be in the pens very early and absolutely no litter on the course.



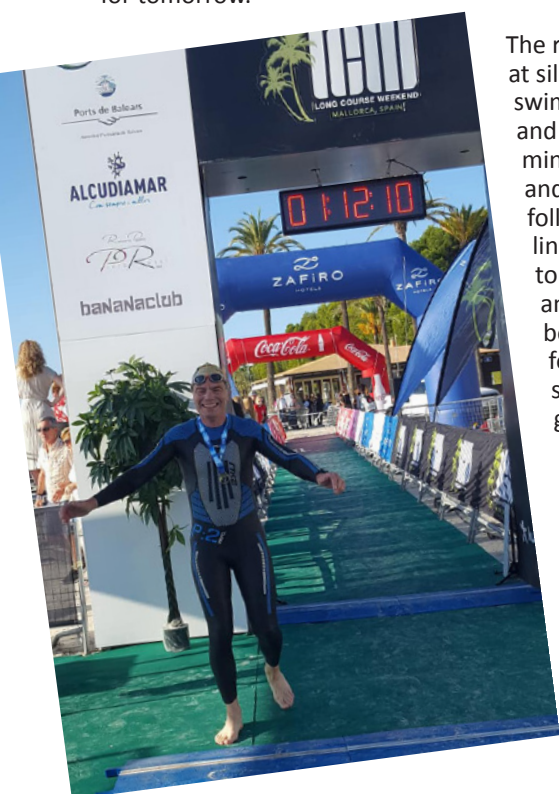
Jenny Lovesey



# MALLORCA LCW

**When I discovered the LCW in Alcúdia Mallorca I decided it would be a great way to end the season. An iron distance triathlon over three days in the sun. Jenny, having only started triathlon last year, entered for the half iron distance.**

We stayed in a luxury hotel (most unusual for us) right by the beach and the start. After a leisurely registration on Friday, we got our bikes ready and went for a short ride. A quick swim in the warm sea was a chance for Jenny to gain some confidence ready for tomorrow.



The race started at 9:00am; no need to get up at silly o'clock. It was a beach start for all the swimmers together; Jenny waited at the back and I charged into the water for a good few minutes of arm bashing. The water was lovely and clear so it was easy to find a few feet to follow, although I did sometimes wonder what line they were taking. I was really pleased to do the first lap in 33 minutes and then an Australian exit and back in. A light swell began to build and the water was not so good for drinking as at Box End. The beach was in sight for the second time and a big push to gain some places achieved nothing, but once out of the water I gained a couple more places to finish 55th in a time of 1:11:41; so far ahead of my expectation that Jenny was caught by surprise and I had to repeat the finish for her photo. Jenny completed 1900m without any paddies, which was excellent. And now we understood what LCW transition was all about; sun loungers, refreshments and enjoying the sun.

Sunday was bike day starting at a very reasonable 8:30am. The iron distance

course was four loops sportive style on closed roads, with TT bikes banned for safety. I have never entered one of these before so my strategy was to go out hard and drop back if I needed to. After five miles along the sea front, missing a big crash in the lead peloton, we turned up the first gradual incline at about 22mph; I quickly realised the sooner I drop off this group the better or I would be shattered, so I slowed down and waited for someone to catch me. I made a new best friend – a young German woman who was much stronger than me and happy to lead for most of the next 25 miles. The smooth closed roads were great; they would never have done that in the UK for only 400 cyclists. There was a short steep hill half way round and on the third loop our peloton disintegrated with many stopping to refill their water bottles. After a few miles we had a little group of five until I fell off the back on the fourth lap. After another five miles my new friend caught up, having stopped at the top of the hill, and I let her drag me round the next 15 miles. The last few miles were a big effort to gain a few places but I had to let my friend finish in front after all the work she had put in. I finished in 67th position in a time of 5:44:59, half an hour better than I could have done alone on my TT bike. I like this Sportive format!

Jenny's race was two laps and started 3 hours after mine, so time for some food in transition and a few drinks before wandering up to the finish line to cheer her in. She also had a good race and had some good groups to cycle with, finishing in 3:30:28.

Monday was to be more tiring than the day before, so we took our recovery in transition a little more seriously; after food and drink we had a quick swim in the sea to try to ease the legs out ready for tomorrow.

Run day began with a 9:00am start for both the half and full courses. For me it was a 4.5 lap course around the sea front, mostly on roads or the path behind the beach. I was hoping for four hours but for some reason the legs were feeling a little tired. The marathon course had an extra little section to the half, so I passed Jenny a couple of times. I ran with two others but at 13.1 miles our threesome broke up with me definitely slowing until we got to 21 miles. With only five miles left I started to push for the end and reeled quite a few people in, finishing in 4:04:30 which I am really pleased with, finishing in 67th place and 62nd place overall.

I was a bit disappointed to see my total time was 11:01:11; it would have been nice to grab my only likely chance to ever get under 11 hours for an iron distance. However some might say that my real time was 53:04:30 (Eva Kovacs). Either way it's going to be my own personal record!

So how was I at the end? Absolutely shattered! Three days of giving your maximum instead of one long day is just as tiring and just as rewarding. I would have recommended this race, but that was the last year in Mallorca due to a total of only 200 athletes doing the full weekend although others did one or two races.

**Simon King**





# WEIGHTY ISSUES

## SEASON 2

In the last edition of On The Run I was happy to report the amazing fund raising by our Weighty Issues group. As a group we have a laugh on WhatsApp whilst keeping ourselves at a healthy weight. On the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 we jumped on to the scales for the first time and this time last year, I was able to proudly reveal that we had raised £827 for some great causes. I am more than proud to report that since then, we have more than doubled that and have now raised a fabulous £1839. Even though the funds raised come mainly from our little slip ups - a teeny ounce up here, one too many nibbles there, we have now been able to celebrate more members of the group moving down from one stone to another and staying there. The reward for this is often that someone else pledges to the charity for encouragement to get them to stay at the lower stone by then end of term.

Most of us are still at lower weights than September 2017, and those who aren't have had injury issues and other worries to make it difficult for them to concentrate.

So, here is what we have raised to date. I sincerely hope to be reporting on season 3 this time next year. Anyone wanting to know more about this, please give me a shout.

£200 – Autism Bedford

£152 – Cancer research

£186 – Well Child

£297 – East Anglia Air Ambulance

£279 – Motor Neurone Disease

£202 – Centre Point

£274 – Parkinson's UK

£249 – Rhett UK

Jacinta Horne

## "THERE'S A FROOD WHO REALLY KNOWS WHERE HIS TOWEL IS!" BY ZAPHODB

OK... so you have to be of a certain age to get that one



Bedford Half Marathon towels on their travels  
The Great Barrier Reef - David Sheffield



Tenerife - The Chairman getting papped while taking a well earned rest after  
**THE** Bedford Half Marathon



Closer to home - Fiona Fiander

**Will your towel hitchhike further around the galaxy?**



# ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ TRIATHLON SAN FRANCISCO 2019



**The iconic nature of the water around Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay makes the Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon one of the most sought after 'bucket list' triathlons. Hence the qualifying series and a ballot as the way in. The event incorporates a 1.5mile swim from Alcatraz Island to the mainland, an 18mile bike course and a 9mile trail run. As with many other seasoned triathletes I had entered the ballot for several years without success. Imagine my surprise when I received an email to tell me I was in!! I had a week to enter the event or lose the offer of the place and I set about convincing Paula that a holiday in California in June was just what we needed. So, with my entry confirmed I began researching the challenge ahead and establish how much of an issue was there going to be with water temperature, water current and of course SHARKS! My imagination ran riot and I had visions of training at Box End in an ultra-thick wetsuit equipped with diving knife and spear gun.**

The truth was that the three potential issues were all linked: The water temperature was going to be cold (usually about 12°C) and this was due to the volume of melt water flowing into the bay from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which also contributed enormously to the speed of the current. Lastly, and reassuringly, the volume of melt water led to a significant dilution of salt water in the bay, which was why the 'bigger' sharks headed out to the open sea at this time of year. Leaving only the 'smaller' ones to worry about. The fast-moving cold current, known as the River, would prove to be the biggest challenge.

A key element of open water swimming is sighting on markers or landmarks to navigate around the course and accurate sighting for this swim was crucial as the fast-moving cross current was continuously taking you off course. The organisers had issued brilliant swim sighting tutorial videos that showed the key landmarks for navigation. Following the swim, the race continued with an 18mile bike course which took in many of the really steep climbs in central San Francisco and Golden Gate Park, concluding with an 9mile trail run out to Baker Beach and up the infamous 400-plus-step Sand Ladder.

I very rarely get a good night's sleep before a race and this was no exception: made even more unlikely with the sound of the Alcatraz Island and Angel Island foghorns as a constant reminder of the impending challenge. So, at 04.00 I left the hotel to rack my bike in transition and take the shuttle bus to board the Hornblower - a triple deck paddle steamer. The boat had been cleared of all of its pleasure cruise furniture to accommodate the 2,000 wetsuit-clad athletes. As the 07.30 race start approached the commentator whipped up the atmosphere with all the pomp and circumstance that you would expect from an iconic race in the U.S. He then invited us all to stand and the whole boat blasted out the Star-Spangled Banner. I was ready to throw myself off the boat and into the sea after all that!

The start was signalled by the ship sounding its horn and away went the pro's, quickly followed by the rest of us. We filed towards the lower deck exit gates where we had to cross the timing mat and jump six feet into the water. I pressed my goggles against my head, held my nose clip and leapt.

I was pleased that the temperature was not as cold as expected; as well as my wetsuit, I was wearing neoprene boots and hat, but my initial reaction was that the temperature was OK. However, after swimming for 300 meters or so I encountered the River when the temperature dropped significantly and I needed to adjust my direction far more frequently as the current wanted to take me toward the Golden Gate Bridge. I was unnerved as I could see so many swimmers heading away from me in the direction of the bridge. However, I maintained a heading toward the landmark sight point, I focussed on the information in the briefing where the organisers stressed the importance of swimming across the River and crossing the fast-flowing tide almost immediately after jumping from the Hornblower. If you don't, the current takes you way past the swim exit and you end up several beaches beyond the assigned swim finish losing much time battling to get out of the current and make it to shore only to have to run all the way back to the exit beach to get back on course. The key was sticking strictly to the sight points. I got the navigation spot



on and I crossed the River and then the current took me with a slingshot effect and all I had to do was push hard to arrive at the swim exit beach. Many other athletes weren't as fortunate and were taken by the tide toward Golden Gate Bridge. They either exited several beaches down the coast or were extracted by safety boat.

My swim is usually my weakest discipline and I have to rely on strength on the bike and dogged determination on the run if I am to compete with other more adept swimmers, but for once I completed the swim knowing that all had gone well and when I looked at my watch to see a swim time of 39.27 I was chuffed to bits as this was a PB for the distance. I think I had the current to thank for this one.

So into transition and although I was very cold from the swim it was a clear day and the Californian sun was warming everyone up very nicely. The bike course was short in comparison to the distances I generally race over. However, the San Francisco city hills made it like riding up and down Cemetery Hill for an hour and a bit. Whilst riding the climbs I imagined Steve McQueen's Ford Mustang (in the car chase in Bullitt) coming flying over the crest of the hill with all four wheels off the tarmac - maybe I had had too much sun already.

The trail run took us under the Golden Gate Bridge, on and off road with most of the off-road being on the beach. This made the going very tough and it ended with an ascent of the Sand Ladder: 400 steep steps cut into the cliff from the beach to the highway (this was very similar to the Stairway to Heaven in the Grizzly but quite a bit warmer).

After the climb the course headed back to the finish line at Marina Green opposite Alcatraz Island. I crossed the line exhausted but satisfied.



# ESCAPE

## FROM ALCATRAZ<sup>SM</sup> TRIATHLON

As ever, my loyal support crew [Paula] was there to cheer me in at the finish as she had done throughout the event. In the lead up to the race I think I had become a little bit obsessed with remembering the sight points in the swim occasionally reciting them in bed in the middle of the night, so Paula was well aware of the potential issues with the swim. She was relieved to see me exit the water – almost as relieved as I was.

The race had lived up to its billing and to its status. The iconic nature of the swim provided all racers with a massive sense of achievement and for me ... well this was the first time in any triathlon that my swim had been the best part of my race.

**Paul Stuart**







# CHEVIOT GOAT WINTER ULTRA 7/12/2019

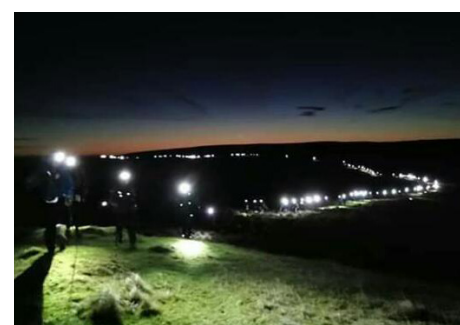
It was an early start under a starry Northumbrian sky for the 280 competitors taking part in the third edition of the Cheviot Goat winter ultra. A long day beckoned for many taking on the 55mile challenge over these remote bog strewn hills. 80mph winds and rain were forecast for the night to come and because of this the course had been reversed as this would ease safety cover over the later stages of the race. Competitors spread out into a ribbon of torches as we climbed the hills towards the Cheviot itself, firstly just through muddy fields but all too soon bogs, and the fun began in earnest.

Three hours of leaping over, scuttling round or wading through bogs of varying depth followed before the relief of the (sometimes) paved section along the Pennine Way. After a short out and back to the summit we headed southwest along the Scottish border for around ten miles before forking off down towards the Coquet valley and the 'halfway' checkpoint at Barrowburn farm. Although the paving slabs provided easier running there were frequent pools of peaty water to negotiate providing a variation on Russian roulette. Were the slabs still there under the water or had they disappeared leading to a waist deep plunge into a mire? On more than one occasion I got it wrong!

Barrowburn farm provided the opportunity to meet up with a drop bag (which I'd declined) and the offer of soup & roll which I gratefully took up, and walked slowly on eating as I went.

Darkness returned, the weather deteriorated and peat bogs reappeared. Negotiating the ridge round to Bloodybush Edge and beyond to Bleakhope provided challenging navigation with visibility down to a few feet in the fog, wind and rain. Nebulous paths were found and lost as we meandered through the bogs occasionally encountering checkpoints manned by the North of Tyne mountain rescue team who provided much appreciated assistance to those in need and psychological support for the rest of us. It was reassuring to know they were there. It was very much head down and plough on one step at a time, definitely a high proportion of type 2 fun for this section! But all things pass and the miles slowly counted down, turned into single figures and at last the finish back at Ingram arrived. Then it was just the small matter of an hour's drive back to base for bath, beer and bed.

**Richard Beard**







## 2019 BANTHAM SWOOSH

**Sylvia Jones, Kate Williams, Lynn Christison, Helen Gardner and I, Noel Jones, headed down to South Devon for the 2019 Bantham Swoosh. This is a 6k swim down the Devon Avon estuary assisted by the tide with an exciting swoosh at the end.**

The first part in the channel was quite murky but it cleared in the main channel and also was quite a few degrees warmer. Here we were allowed to pass people and there was plenty of room to do so. Navigation was never an issue with a good number of green hats to follow. I saw Lynn briefly as we tried to work our way past a group but after that it was just me and 800 or so other swimmers in identical green hats.

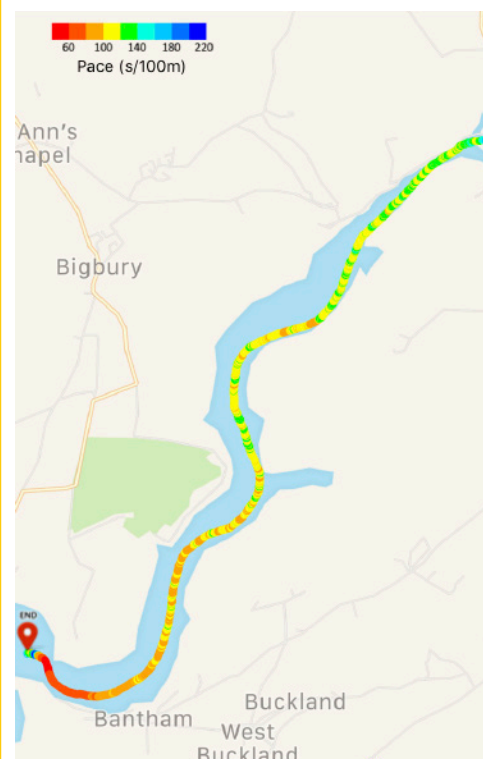
My GPS gizmo reports distance every 5 minutes and the first report was 228m. Wow, and I'd thought it was quite a slow start! 252m for the next 5 minutes, I've never hit 250m in the lake despite my best efforts. The distances progressively increased hitting 300m after an hour. Crazy fast I thought.

Before starting I'd said I wanted to take my time and look around but my view was essentially sandy bottom, tree lined bank, sandy bottom, tree lined bank. I was quite happy with that. I was sighting frequently to avoid bumping into people (not helping the chaffing) and saw quite a bit of the view ahead. Occasionally the trees gave way to hillsides that I recognised running across last year, which made me smile more inside.

I was passing quite a few swimmers and realised that it was the slower swimmers from each wave as I came across them in sets with gaps between. In any case it was a boost to know that I was swimming quite strongly. The Tuesday coached sessions with the Bedford Harriers were paying dividends.

Bantham came into view and the few words of the briefing that I'd heard came to mind - it really is as close as it looks! I could see the sandy bottom whizz by, with the current pushing me laterally as well as forward. Another wow, 384m in five minutes. Would I hit 400? (No.) We'd been going for only 90 minutes. I was actually a bit disappointed that it would be over soon. A large boat turned the final swoosh into more of a maelstrom and then we were pointed at the beach. A helper pulled me up and I fell over. She tried again so I fell over again. Then she let me get up by myself and it was third time lucky. I looked up and saw a smiling Kate who had finished just before me. We'd finished virtually together.

The  
**Outdoor  
Swimming  
Society**



Lynn and Helen emerged shortly after and not much later we spotted Sylvia. Yes! We'd all done it. All of us faster than I think we'd individually expected.

**Noel Jones**



# IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019, KONA, HAWAII

**A small group of Harriers have experienced the Big Dance, as it is affectionately known, and many more still strive to make it to the Big Island. This is my experience of this Ironman journey.**

Ten years ago I took part in my first sprint triathlon. It was followed by a second and third sprint distance. I joined Bedford Harriers and was talked into an Olympic, a middle distance and by 2010 a full Ironman. Being me, I already had dreams of Kona but I was completely unaware of what it took to not just qualify but to succeed there.

My first visit to Kona was a disaster. I loved the island, was awed by the occasion and failed absolutely to race anywhere near my ability. I never wanted to do another triathlon.

On my second visit I had the best race ever. I felt strong and confident and I swam, rode and ran to my potential but frustratingly had a recurring mechanical issue which dropped me down the podium.

My third visit was the most frustrating and devastating. I was on amazing form, when a half ton horse jumped on my foot and I was relegated to standing on the side-lines watching the best conditions the race had ever seen and feeling like I had missed my chance.

So the fourth visit was full of mixed emotions. I was not on the form of the previous year but at least had all my bones intact. There was only one aim; could I make it onto the top step?

Hawaii is an amazing place. I have raced all over the world and this remains my favourite destination. The racing is hard due to the wind and heat, which are extreme and often downright dangerous, but the views are incredible and the sea amazing to swim in. There is also loads to see and do even just on Big Island and the incredible people I met this year only added to the enjoyment of being in such an iconic place.



The Ironman village must be the biggest in the world and amongst the plethora of tri gear I came across the fuck cancer stand. These guys are all about early detection of all forms of cancer through education and awareness as well as giving cancer sufferers opportunities to fulfil their dreams. They have an endurance tri team so a quick podcast with them was time well spent and I wore the F\* Cancer armband for the race.



I thought 2 weeks to acclimatise would leave plenty of time for being a tourist and some general chilling, but actually my time was fully occupied with training, sorting out mechanical, running shoe and nutrition issues, trying out sea sickness strategies, shopping for affordable healthy food, and that is after having to find new accommodation when our Airbnb fell through.



We were into race week before we knew it. The town started to fill up, the hype began to build, the coffee boat appeared on the swim course and general mayhem took hold, including the infamous underpants run where everyone jogs along the front in their undies or questionable fancy dress ostensibly for charity but actually in an undeniable display of exhibitionism.





The day before the race is bike-racking, which at Kona is different from any other race. The commentators welcome you into the racking area, you get a personal racking helper to show you where everything goes and to explain the flow of transition and there are rows of people with clipboards noting bike makes, wheels, helmets etc. It's the start of the circus.

Race morning and it was still dark as we set off. After waiting in line for an hour after the pro start I finally waded into the warm water and with a last breath before the onslaught of salty water I swam out to the black starting buoys. The water was not rough but there was a deep swell and although the outward leg was relatively straightforward, the return leg was anything but, with the swell, waves and an outgoing current and no wet-suit to provide buoyancy. As my feet finally touched the sand at the swim exit my watch told me I'd been swimming for 1:15hrs; a Kona PB for me!

Onto the bike and a few km into the course was a no-passing zone where, out of nowhere, a red streak flew by on my inside. It was my main rival and she made her intentions very clear. The race was on.

The winds were fairly light on the way out and my instructions were not to go out hard so I arrived at the foot of the climb and was happy to have plenty of energy to push on up to the top. It's a long way up that climb and the turnaround could not come too soon, My body had once again refused to go with the plan for solid fuel but at least my backup plan of enough carbs and electrolytes in liquid form seemed to be working.

Shortly after the turnaround I passed my French rival, who was clearly in trouble so I was now in front of her but was not sure who else was in the race or where they were. The field was more spread out here so there was a lot of riding on my own with just the odd cyclist to overtake every so often. It's hard to gauge effort with no-one else about so trying to keep motivated to work hard I used mental strategies we had prepared for the race, which did seem to help. Riding into T2 was a huge relief, with just the run to survive.

At the start of the run I felt great and felt even better when I was told I was in the lead of my age group. The race was mine to lose! I was able to keep up a decent pace on the first, flat section but the second section of the run went further out on a new course and the 13 mile marker took forever to arrive. The remaining miles ticked down even slower. After the turnaround I was on the lookout for other ladies in my age group, but I didn't spot any until near the top of that section, so a good deal behind.

I knew I just had to run it in now and the biggest threat to me was myself. I needed to maintain my pace, concentrate on hydration and nutrition and make sure I made it to the finish line. Counting down the last few miles meant the end was in sight and I was now racing the sunset.



Re-invigorated in the final mile, which I knew was downhill and then the blue carpet on the famous Alii Drive was one to savour. The final run in was every bit as good as I had imagined. Crossing the line 1st in my age group I hadn't realised quite how much this would mean to me. The first thought clearly had to be finish photos (Eva Kovacs is my inspiration) but to be greeted with such enthusiasm was incredible. The finish video shows quite how much it meant to me as I wobbled between laughing and crying whilst attempting to answer journalist's questions on camera for a tri magazine. Relief was the overwhelming emotion; the feeling of having finally, at long last, put a long-held goal to bed. Job done.

**Gill Fullen**





# BASHING THE BEDS BOUNDARY

19-20 April 2019



## WHAT AN AMAZING 24HRS!

Hi, I'm Rob Burrells. My sister Debbie was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in February 2018. She wanted to raise as much money as she could in the limited time she had left and with her inspiration, my idea and the help of Nick Kier, Bedford Park Rotary Club and Alastair Fadden the Beds Boundary Bash was born.

There were seven teams of three doing the Boundary Run with five miles on and 10 miles off over approximately 145 miles, with a further five miles to finish. The start and finish were at Picts Hill House, Turvey, courtesy of Richard Cavin (Honorary Vice President of Bedford Harriers) We started at nine am on Good Friday and the weather was glorious though a bit warm for running. The hardest thing was the stop/start: as runners we know how difficult it is to get going again! We all had no sleep and very little food, but plenty of swearing! Approximately 24 hours after setting out we were back at Picts Hill House, having covered about 45 miles each. But that wasn't the end! Another five miles had to be done around the estate, accompanied by around 180 runners. The atmosphere was fantastic and the friendship and generosity was unbelievable. We raised a total of £77,000 so my thanks go out to everyone who helped and gave towards this. Bedford Harriers Boundary runners were Marianne Williamson, Andrea Sewell, Andy Sewell, Alastair Fadden and myself, **Rob Burrells**.





# 2019 ITU AGE GROUP WORLD TRIATHLON GRAND FINAL - LAUSANNE

My quest to race in the Olympic distance ITU Age Group World Triathlon Grand Final began at a qualifying event at Grafham Water on a cold morning in May 2018 ... it just wasn't to be: the water was cold as was the early morning air temperature and combined with trying to handle a new TT bike I was well down the pack coming into T2 and despite making up a few places up on the run I wasn't going to qualify.

My second attempt came somewhat by default when offering to support a fellow Harrier at Leeds Castle in June 2018 and then at the last moment deciding to enter the race too. In contrast this was a lovely warm and sunny morning; I held my own on the swim and bike and had a good run on the hilly course that suited me. I was 5<sup>th</sup> in my age group and although not an automatic qualifying place the fact I was not far behind the winner gave me one of the 8 roll down places ... I was in!!

So after a couple more triathlons in 2018 I began to focus my thoughts and training on the event in Lausanne ... cue injury!! My neck injury kept me out of training for 4 months but by March things were improving and I slowly began training again. By August, although not at peak fitness, I was able to compete and headed to Lausanne.

The World final is a large multinational event held over several days with athletes competing at both Sprint & Olympic distances in all age groups including elite level. Walking to register I was in awe of the elite juniors who were racing; so quick, no doubt triathlon stars of the future. Having registered, time for the GB team briefing - an hour of do's & don'ts, rules & regulations - if I wasn't already nervous, I was now.

The next day should have been bike racking & resting but how can you miss the Elite men's and ladies' race? I couldn't and so ensued several hours of watching Jonny Brownlee, Javier Gomez, Jess Learmouth, Katie Zafres and all the other stars racing through the streets of Lausanne at close quarters: something I will always remember as they were both great races.

Race day dawned and the heat of the previous few days gave way to cloudier breezier conditions so the millpond that had been Lake Geneva for the previous few days gave way to choppy conditions: not great since the race had been declared non-wetsuit. I struggled to a pedestrian swim and was pleased to get on the bike only to find it was both a hilly and technical street circuit than I hadn't expected, so the bike didn't go too well either. The run by contrast was a better affair and I found myself overtaking lots of athletes and was pleased to see the finish in Ouchy Olympic park right beside Lake Geneva.

It was certainly not my best race in terms of time or position but one I'm glad to have had chance to compete in. Lausanne is a beautiful city that, combined with the Olympic museum, embraces so much of what sport is about.

## Kevin Willett



'Twas the night before Bedford Harriers Half,  
And all over the roads,  
Signs were being put up; "Caution Runners Go Slow"  
Preparation underway, high viz heroes in yellow,  
The wonderful Harrier ladies and fellows.  
The runners were nestled all snug in their beds,  
Whilst visions of finish lines danced in their heads,  
Last minute worries, and panic alarming,  
"Where are my gels?" and "Did I charge my Garmin?"  
Race day breakfast stops your stomach from growls,  
Just thirteen small miles between you and your towel,  
The hustle and bustle and race day palava,  
The things runners will do for kudos on strava!

**Debi Fisher**



# 5K YOUR WAY

## A CANCER SUPPORT GROUP WITH A DIFFERENCE

Quietly, without fanfare a support group with a difference is growing in Bedford. We all know someone living with or beyond cancer. What many people don't realise is that physical activity has been shown to have important benefits for people living with a cancer diagnosis. It reduces cancer related fatigue, helps to preserve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness and improves psychological well-being. It may also reduce the side effects of treatment and reduce the risk of cancer recurrence. An NHS report found that only 23% of people with cancer achieve the recommended 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 times a week.

This is where 5k Your Way, Move Against Cancer comes in. This initiative encourages patients, family, friends and those working in cancer services to walk, jog, run, volunteer or cheer with a local group at a parkrun event on the last Saturday of every month and then socialise over a drink and cake afterwards. In short, we are an active coffee morning combining fresh air, movement and socialising.

The Bedford 5k Your Way group is run by myself and my fellow ambassador, local runner, GP and breast cancer survivor Jenny Wilson.

After my surgery for breast cancer in 2018 there was an overwhelming temptation to tuck myself up on the sofa and rest. The hospital had given me some very gentle physio for my shoulders but hadn't mentioned any other sort of exercise. I knew that our resident superwoman, Gill Fullen, had carried on exercising through her treatment, but I'm just an "Easy Group" runner, maybe I should take my mother's advice, stay indoors and not overdo it.

A week later, at my first check-up. I asked, "When can I run or swim again? The answer was that I could do whatever I felt I could manage. I went out and jogged a little around the village, walked parkrun the next weekend and swam a Trinity session a fortnight later. Although I felt tired, I was elated. I was getting a little bit of normality back.

Throughout chemotherapy I continued to get to parkrun every Saturday. I ran or walked when I could or handed out tokens when I wasn't so well. I even run-directed from a folding chair. It kept me sane and coffee and cake with friends was something to look forward to each weekend.

Gill introduced me to Mary, A 5k Your Way Ambassador at Cambridge parkrun who told me about this great national initiative. It was founded by oncology consultant and 12 times ironman champion Lucy Gossage and Gemma Hiller-Moses, International runner and Founder of the Move charity, who herself was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 24 in 2012.

I thought this was brilliant idea; I had so much support from my association with parkrun and I really wanted to encourage others to experience the same benefits. Together with Jenny, who is a member of the parkrun core team at Bedford, we set up our own group - one of 43 across the UK - at Bedford Park. We recently went to Nottingham to run Forest Parkrun and meet with the other ambassadors. A really fantastic and motivating experience. As well as the founders we met Tom Williams, Chief Operating Officer of parkrun Global who confirmed the strong collaboration with parkrun and their commitment to helping us grow.

Each month new participants are welcomed. You don't have to run or even cover the whole 5k. A gentle walk from the car park to the café to cheer, drink coffee and chat is all that is required. You don't have to have cancer now or even recently. Friendships are cementing and a supportive community is being built. The wonderful community of parkrun volunteers has facilitated this growth and a snowball is beginning to roll as people see the value in a group such as ours.

Getting out in the open air, and moving with other people is what it is all about.

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining us we would encourage them to register with 5k Your Way and parkrun via <https://5kyourway.org/register> and meet us by the bandstand in Bedford park at 8.45 on the last Saturday of every month. Jenny and I are looking forward to meeting many more new participants in 2020.

Sylvia Jones





# TUESDAY SWIMMING

In September when the days were still quite light I decided to join the coached swimming at Bedford School run by the Harriers. This was quite a difficult step to take because at the age of 10 I was taught to swim breast stroke and for the last 50 years that is what I have done. My hair definitely didn't get wet, I hated being splashed and the thought of putting my face in the water terrified me. I had always admired the fast sleek swimming of those doing front crawl as they made it look so easy. Angie Finch had mentioned the Tuesday swimming to me last year but I chickened out. This year I thought I'd give it a go.

At the first session there were lots of people. We were divided into ability groups each with their own coach. I was in a group of people who also could only do breast stroke or were not very good at front crawl. Some were more confident swimmers than me but that didn't matter as we were all out of our comfort zones and willing to improve.

Simon Fisher, Kate Williams, and Sally Johnston were the coaches for my group. They took us right back to basics, beginning with blowing bubbles and sinking. After a few sessions I was able to put my face in the water although I'm still struggling to sink! Learning the new stroke has been like learning to swim again. Each week doing drills with fins and pull buoy and learning to breathe and not hold my breath. All the coaches gave masses of encouragement and support with lots of pointers to ensure I was getting things right. On the last session we had some fun relays including rubber ducks which I was able to join in. Something I hadn't thought I'd be able to do – I thought I'd have to sit and watch the experts, but the teams were all mixed up to include fast and slow swimmers and we had a fun time. I'm still not quite there with the stroke but I'm a lot further on than I was when I began!

It has been exhausting but also fun doing the sessions and as the evenings have got darker and colder it's taken a little more effort to get out for an 8.30pm swim, but I'm so glad I've made the effort. I can't thank Simon, Kate and Sally enough for the help, encouragement and patience they've shown me to get me to this stage and hopefully I will find 'it all comes together' soon!

Lynn Short



## SWIM TRAINING - BEDFORD HARRIERS TUESDAY EVENINGS

**I have always said I can swim, I consider myself as a social swimmer and certainly not a competitive swimmer. I leaned to swim at junior school and had many a happy summer swimming in rivers, at the old Newnham Pool (where Aspects now is), in the sea, and as an adult in Buttermere and Crummock Water after great days of fell walking. More recently swimming has been with my granddaughter at Oasis, which she really loves.**

I have competed in a few duathlons, including for GB in Europe, but steered well away from triathlon as I felt the swim bit was not for me. Why? I can think of many reasons, but do they stack up, probably not.

When the Tuesday evening swimming started in autumn 2019, I decided to give it a go. The coaching doesn't start until 8.30pm and it's quite a challenge after a long day to get back out the door and be prepared to improve one's swimming.

The first night there were 40 of us, in a 6-lane pool with at least 4 Harrier swim coaches and at the end of the night, I felt it to be a good night of swimming. After a few weeks of being coached, I realised my swimming was not as good as I thought and I chose to move down the swim groups to have more time to concentrate on the swim stroke and less on swimming at speed. The coaches are great at supporting us and they are all people we know and respect.

I now have 'the kit' pull buoy, fins (not flippers!), paddles, tempo trainer etc and not surprisingly they all have their place in improving your swimming. Swimmer numbers have settled down to about 20 which is manageable.

As with everything one swim session a week is not enough and with work it has limited the opportunity to swim more, but in the new year I will make more time, I promise. I do feel that I am starting to improve, learning good technique and feeling I want to swim more.

So, do I regret not doing the coached swimming years ago? I think yes, especially as it's coached so well. Would I recommend it to others irrespective of how well they can swim? Absolutely.

Finally, why did I start swim training, well it's exercise, and using other muscles from those used in running and cycling so good for overall fitness. While swimming in a pool has to fit around the pool availability, swimming does not necessarily need be in a pool, so I am going to explore open water swimming and I have in mind the Gt North Swim (Windermere) in June, the 1 mile distance, and the Swim Serpentine in September, the 2 miles distance plus other more local open water swimming.

I was hoping to run London Marathon, cycle Ride London and do the swim in 2020, but failed in the London Marathon ballot so looking to do another marathon instead.

Irrespective of missing out on the London Marathon, and doing Ride London for the third time, and having already done London Marathon in the past, on completion of Swim Serpentine, I qualify for the London Classic Medal. This is my target for 2020.

Chris Capps





# A FIRST SUMMER OF HIGHS AND LOWS IN MULTISPORT

**I joined the Harriers Tuesday night swim sessions, for a few reasons: I like swimming, I thought the coached sessions would help my technique, some had suggested that swimming helped improve running and there was a little part of me that wanted to do a triathlon. I signed up for an aquathlon at Hever Castle's Festival of Endurance in July, so improving my swimming became a necessity.**

In April Melly Burrell posted the announcement I had been waiting for - the Couch-to-Tri programme (C2T) was to start in May. That part of me that wanted to do a triathlon was happy and set out to convince the rest of me that I should sign-up. We were given a challenging training programme but there was also the small problem of my only bike, a 25+-year-old Raleigh, being unroadworthy.

The C2T was intense - 10 weeks of full-on training: cycling, swimming, running; some sessions were coached and others independent.

I borrowed a bike and soon realised that not having ridden for some time was a bit of an issue - it's an understatement to suggest I'm not very comfortable on a bike. Our first C2T ride (my second road bike ride ever) was scary to say the least. It was raining, and the route was full of hills! We rode from Box End Park to Harold-Odell Country Park, ate cake and then rode back. It became apparent that uphill knackered me completely and downhill terrified me!

Our first open water swim was horrendous as the water was a cold 13.4°C. Ice-cream head while swimming was a new experience for me and it was somewhat shorter than I imagined it would be - 200m at best. I waited a month before venturing into the lake again and bought a wetsuit after a more successful swim. It was still blooming cold, but I did at least manage a lap of the lake. The following week, I purchased a season ticket for Box End and a summer of open water swimming commenced - I was hooked!

C2T was going well, lots of swimming, a hill session with Gary Finch and a more sedate bike skills session with Angie Finch and Kate Williams, where among other things we tried drinking on the move - a skill that still eludes me - and generally increased our confidence on bikes.

Suddenly July was upon us and we were pitching our tent at Hever Castle. We had assumed we would open our tents to a castle view, the reality was a field under the flightpath of Gatwick Airport, which meant we instead saw the undercarriages of lots of planes! I hadn't yet swum 1.9k in open water and never in a river.

The sounds of the planes were drowned out by rain during the night and Sunday morning - not what we were expecting when desperately seeking shade the previous day! My start time wasn't until 9:15am, so I had a lie in and stayed in my tent to keep calm and dry. This was the biggest event that I had raced in - it was slightly overwhelming.

The swim was really pleasant; I took advice and positioned myself to the side and near the back, so no-one swam over me. I was pleased to get out of the swim around my target time. However, the run to transition was very slippery: not only the rain, but the

hundreds of wet competitors before me had left puddles on the now wet, smooth paving. Plus, the castle was open to tourists who loitered on the path! I sat in transition feeling a bit despondent and took my time to dry my feet and get my running shoes on - my first transition was very slow!

The run was a cross-country course - I dislike cross-country almost as much as hills and this course was 10.5k of both! The weather was still gloomy and running in wet, cold kit while sweating was a weird sensation. I found it quite brutal, the only highlight was running through a forest and having a fallow deer on the path about 10 metres in front of me. It brightened my mood and helped me get to the end. My time was slower than I had hoped, the run was tougher than I had expected, and I realised I had spent so much time concentrating on the swim element that I hadn't done enough cross-country running. My event was over, so I spent the rest of the day cheering on most other Harriers who were still out on the Gauntlet, aquabike and half-marathon route - now in full sunshine! Hever was a great start to my multisport season - I found it really inspiring.

The week before the sprint tri, I went to Scotland with school, where I only managed one run and no cycling or swimming and after a bad journey back, I was really tired and drained by the time I got home.

I was really nervous and didn't sleep very well. We got to Box End Park, registered and found our support crew. I got into the water ready for the start and felt really calm but when the race started and I tried to swim, it all went horribly wrong; I couldn't breathe and swim and I was soon struggling with the tail kayak next to me. I kept treading water, regaining control over my breathing, trying to swim and then hyperventilating! I thought 'just put your hand on the kayak and it'll all be over', but





with all the training I had done, I really wanted to finish this, which I did in a dismal 33 minutes. I climbed out with lots of support from coaches and other Harriers. It was about 7 miles into the ride when I realised that I was no longer hyperventilating. It wasn't the easiest bike ride; my body was physically exhausted and I was struggling mentally. I got off my bike and set off on the run - well walk - I basically walked most of it because every time I tried to run, I started hyperventilating again.

However - I finished my first triathlon!

I can honestly say I hated every minute of it. One thing was obvious though, I needed to get back in the water and soon. That evening, I had a message inviting Richard and me to be part of a team for a triathlon relay at Box End Park the following Sunday. "Of course!", I responded!

Competing in teams of three with each member completing all three disciplines, my team was Laurène Lee, myself and Richard (Lawson). The weather was horrible - cold and rainy. I was really nervous waiting in transition for Laurène to finish her swim, tentatively got into the water wondering whether I would have a repeat of the previous week, but I didn't. In fact, I overtook a couple of people, exited quickly and ran to transition passing the chip onto Richard. My swim, with runs to and from transition, was sub-20 minutes. The weather deteriorated before I went out on the bike, a different course to the previous week, with lots of hills. The road was slippery and it was cold. By the time I passed the chip onto Richard, the conditions were very unpleasant - but at least he had a mountain bike and all the extra grip from his bigger tyres. We finished the relay in good spirits, we didn't win anything, but I managed to regain some of the confidence I had lost the previous week.

Bedford Triathlon was the next event - Richard and I were both swimming for different teams. 1500m in the Great Ouse in Bedford - lots of people tried to put us off this; the water quality, the debris, the weeds and so on, but my biggest concern was whether I would be able to climb out. I was assured the exit would be manageable but it had to be moved due to weeds and I was horrified to see a steep ramp: there was no way I would be able to climb out of the river! Peter Pack came to the rescue and screwed some batons onto the ramp to make it easier for everyone, but I spent the night worrying about it.

My swim was uneventful; I really enjoyed it, seeing the landmarks along the Embankment from a different perspective. My exit was smooth and I didn't struggle at all; a huge thanks to the marshals who pulled me out. I ran to transition and passed my chip to Bev Tredget who rode an awesome 41km, handing the chip over to Jo Smythe who finished off with a fantastic 10km run. We beat the boys' team, so we were ecstatic!

The following week I celebrated my 50th birthday - what better way to do so than by taking part in an evening aquathlon at Box End? It was a fun event, very friendly and well-organised. I enjoyed my swim and run and was happy to don my new Dryrobe at the end. We finished off the evening in the bar with a tasty hot chocolate.



The first weekend in September saw our final multisport event for the year, our second individual sprint triathlon at Box End. I was much better prepared this time: had a relaxing Saturday, a good night's sleep and stayed relatively relaxed before the swim. I swam well which meant my bike and run went well too, although transitions were still slow. I finished 26+ minutes quicker than the first one and I was so happy to finish the season on a high.

So, what's next? Well, we're already booked in for the Olympic distance triathlon at Chateau de Chantilly and will soon be booking for the Harriers Triathlon, individually this time. I've been swimming in the river over the winter so that I can get a nice early start when Box End re-opens and I have a brand-new bike. I'm very much looking forward to our second season of multisport.

**Elaine Massie**



# FANCY A LONG RACE IN 2020?

Being fortunate enough to win one of the Harriers' London Marathon places, 2019 was the year I ramped up my distances and went from a girl who'd never run further than a half-marathon to a girl who prefixed 15 mile runs with the word 'only'. As part of my marathon training, I entered some milestone races, including the Naseby 1645 and the Ashridge Boundary Run. These routes cover similar distances and both take place in the countryside in early Spring. Both are hilly courses with lovely views, great marshals and friendly organisers.



Here are my verdicts:

Race name?	Naseby 1645 (16.45 miles).	Ashridge Boundary Run (16.5 miles).
Weather?	Perfect. Mild, dry, still.	Chilly and drizzly with 40mph winds.
Terrain?	Road.	Trail.
Elevation profile?	Described as 'challenging' by the organisers, it wasn't too different to the Oakley 20. Predominantly downhill at the start and uphill at the end.	Punishing with a downhill start and an uphill everything else!
Synopsis	Scared of going off too fast I ran the first half of the race conservatively. It really helped to tick off the remaining distances in my head... 'only Sandy 10 to go'... 'only 10k to go' etc. The second half was noticeably more challenging than the first and I was glad to have paced myself, even managing a sprint finish to try and catch fellow Harrier Tony Jones in the distance at the end.	The first half of the race was deceptively easy. Not only was it mostly downhill but it was also quite sheltered being in the woods. I took it steady and chatted to people around me, many of whom were also training for their first marathon. The second half was more exposed and the winds were brutal making it much harder. At about 11 miles I had to pause to go over a stile and would have loved to have stopped for a breather until a voice behind me said 'please don't stop – you're keeping me going!'. It was a runner called Emma from MK Redway Runners and from then on we ran together and kept each other going.
Biggest hill?	'Dicks Hill' at mile 10.	Ivinghoe Beacon at mile 13. With a headwind. Staying upright was difficult enough, never mind walking up. Running was out of the question!
Any disappointments?	Other than the queue for the loo at the start (the portaloos had been ordered but not delivered through no fault of the organisers so the queues were something else with only 3 toilets between 400 people) it was a fantastic event and I wouldn't have changed a thing.	No mile markers, other than '1 mile to go'. It wasn't a big deal as I had my Garmin, but I personally find something satisfying about running past mile markers and mentally ticking them off.
Goodies?	CLIF bar, medal and long-sleeved technical t-shirt.	Homemade cake and a Beanie hat.
Post-race experience?	Stopping off at a garden centre café for coffee and a toastie with Harrier friends on the way home.	Locking my keys in my car and having to be towed home by the AA.
Would I do it again?	Yes.	I've already entered for 2020!



# MY MARATHON JOURNEY

**My marathon journey started one Wednesday night in December, this is when the marathon draw takes place. I was just sitting listening to the names being pulled out and all of a sudden Jo pulled out a name and looked our way. All I can remember was a feeling of shock as my name was called (apparently, I had a gone white as a ghost).**

My training started in earnest after Christmas with the usual weekday runs with the club and the weekends put aside for the longer runs. For the first two weekends I started off on my own at about 7-8 miles. After that I had the support of Angela Sloan, Jeanette Rinaldi, Caroline Diggie and Carla Arnold, increasing our mileage every weekend (it became mandatory for selfies during our runs as a group). The training was tough and I felt like I could have given up. Amongst the training runs I did the Grizzly Cub, a 17 mile run at Hemel Hempstead (this run was organised by Gade Valley Runners – designed for marathon training) and my last long run was Oakley 20 (I did not make the cut off for this but I did finish). After this we started to cut down the mileage for the last few weeks.

**YEAH the training was done and now it was race day: LONDON here I come!**

What can I say about the London Marathon? What I can say is, 'Wow what an atmosphere!' It is true the crowds do help you along the way (especially all the Bedford Harriers I saw on the course). I thought it might be too daunting running in a huge race but I loved it and the feeling when you finish is unbelievable.

If you asked me just before the marathon if I would do it again the answer would have been no, but after the marathon the answer is yes, especially for the atmosphere.

If you would like a challenge this is one for you. At the beginning I thought I would not be able to achieve a marathon (it was a pipe-dream). All I can say it does not matter how fast you run as long as you are running it for yourself and the experience. Lastly I would like to thank all the Bedford Harriers for all their support on my journey I could not have done this without you all.

**Michelle Fadden**







# WENN EINER EINE REISE MACHT, DANN KANN ER WAS ERZÄHLEN

**Bedford has been twinned with the German town of Bamberg for over 40 years and we were delighted when the organisers of the Weltkulturerbelauf (world culture heritage run - I think only Germans can invent a title like that) invited members from Bedford Harriers to take part in the various races in May 2019. Distances available were 21.1 km, 10.9km and 4.4km so something for all abilities.**

Organising hotel rooms for 32 travellers is like nailing jelly to the wall but we got there in the end. The hotel was next to the railway station as most people had opted to take the train or a combination of plane/train to get to Bamberg. The hotel was located quite centrally and most importantly, within walking distance of a pub.



Bamberg is home to seven breweries and many Harriers could not refuse the offer of a brewery tour where they got to sample the local beer. In true German style a "sample" was half a pint so at the end of the tour there were a lot of merry runners. I think if there hadn't been a race organised on Sunday a few of them would have quite happily carried on trying out the many varieties throughout the weekend.

The organisers of the race had kindly arranged for two guided tours so that everyone had an opportunity to see this beautiful town. The town dates back to medieval times but one of "mad"

King Ludwig's cousins who was king at the time decided that he would like all the houses to look "baroque" so fake baroque facades were added to all the buildings. This has earned Bamberg world heritage status. Nobody is allowed to alter the appearance of their house and in some parts additions such as satellite dishes are strictly verboten. The town has a few "garden farmers" still earning their living by growing crops in large allotments behind their houses. Rather than farming on farmland outside the town the Bamberg people just turned land around the houses into mini-farms and grew vegetables next to the houses. To this day they are known as "Zwiebeltreter", meaning onion stompers. When the onions are growing they produce green shoots which are stomped on so that they release the nutrients into the soil and thus the onions absorb the nutrients whilst growing (see, a trip with the Harriers can be quite educational).



Alastair Fadden had kindly arranged to print and transport a "Team Bamberg" T-shirt for everyone and on Saturday morning we arranged a photo shoot when everyone would wear their shirt. Trying to get 32 people to line up for a photo shoot really did try my patience. One had forgotten to bring his shirt, one disappeared to the loo and one was waiting outside when everyone else was waiting inside the hotel. We got there in the end and as it was raining it was probably the fastest photo shoot ever. Our motto, printed on the shirts, was "Laufend Freunde finden" which is a play on words meaning "making friends whilst running" as well as "continuously making friends".

On Friday night all the twinned towns of Bamberg (they are twinned with Bedford as well as towns in Austria, Czech Republic, France and Hungary) were invited to meet the deputy mayor and we were amazed that they had laid on a full roast dinner as well as free beer and wine. Communication was not easy but a few Harriers were brave enough to strike up conversations with the other guests.

On Saturday morning we had to make our way to an out of town industrial estate to collect race numbers and T-shirts. The organisers had laid on courtesy buses from the town centre but oh no, we shunned that as some of the Harriers decided that it was "only 2.5 miles and the walk will give us an opportunity to see the town". It rained, it was cold, the wind was biting and the industrial estate was bleak and endless. By the time we got to the hall I had lost the will to live. Thankfully a very kind Mr Bird decided that I deserved to be driven back in his warm hire car, my hero. It took a very long hot shower to thaw me out.



On Saturday night the mayor invited the twinned towns to a beautiful concert hall and we were treated to a free full buffet and local beer (I think the seven breweries compete with each other to see who can lay on the most varieties) and wine. Some of the twinned towns had brought their folk bands and dancers with them and we watched some traditional Hungarian and Austrian dances. Luckily, the Harriers were not asked to give a performance so we didn't have to improvise and show them some Morris dancing even though Ian Kingstone was at the ready. A representative from Bedford Harriers was asked to make a speech so Steve Crane thanked our hosts for their wonderful hospitality and presented the mayor with a plaque inscribed with the Bedford Harriers logo and our motto for the weekend (Laufend Freunde finden).







The races on Sunday were well organised and the routes were “challenging”, so I am told (quote “not another sodding hill, are they trying to kill us?”). The Harriers spectators found a vantage point on a bridge from where we could see the runners going past twice. I didn’t think the runners would be able to hear our cheering but apparently some of our lady supporters can be quite vocal (I think there were people in Munich who could hear us).

One of our runners had an unexpected encounter with the cobble stones which cut their run short and resulted in a trip to A&E. I went along as “translator” but luckily we didn’t have to stay long. I fully expected them to give the runner a brain scan and find nothing. Thankfully the runner was well enough in the evening to enjoy a glass of wine or two so no long-term damage done and the sore head next day could have been a combination of the fall and / or hangover. Many thanks to the Harriers at the hotel who looked after the runner and provided Steri-Strips and painkillers.

On Monday it was time to head back home and we all agreed that it had been a fantastic weekend. The organisers made us feel so welcome. They ensured that all the runners had a guaranteed race entry (all 11000 places sell out in less than 15 minutes once the races open for registration!). One of the race organisers, Steffi, had worked in Bedford a few years back and she was very keen for the Harriers to attend. She let us change our entrants list numerous times and was incredibly helpful. We took her some English goodies which we thought she might have sampled when she lived in Bedford. On Thursday we found her office and delivered our mini-hamper of Marmite, Walkers crisps, baked beans and Cadbury chocolate. Her office was absolutely rammed with race items and it was funny to see someone else trying to get ready for a race.

The next race will take place in 2021 and, once we have a date, we will start planning our trip there. Hopefully more Harriers will be able to come with us and enjoy our lovely twin town of Bamberg.

**And we will have some more tales to tell...**

**Jutta Crane**







# COACHED2RUN TO GREAT SOUTH RUN

On Wednesday 17th April 2019 a bunch of new runners were introduced to each other when we all decided to try our hand at running. For me personally, having seen my mum enjoy the sport and the club for many years I thought it was time to see what all the fuss was about.

Having joined the new intake of Coached2Run the training had started. Our coaches, Peter Pack, Lesley Barnes, Jo Knox, Rob and Julia Churcher-Upton, had their work cut out when it came to me. At the start of Coached2Run I was someone who could barely run up the stairs and had a very negative mindset when it came to running. Before I knew it, I had become that person who would set their alarm on a Saturday morning to go and do parkrun with lots of support from both coaches and fellow Harriers.

After a few parkruns I started to really enjoy the sport. Despite finding it really challenging the amount of happiness that being a Harrier gave me made it time to take the trip to No Limitz to buy my own Harriers kit. With kit in hand, booking races seemed like the next thing to do. I had decided to do the Doug Anderson 5k and the 10k Race For Life.

Race For Life week arrived and I was really nervous. Every single one of my fellow runners and coaches were really supportive and with a pep talk from Pete I felt ready to go. That Sunday I had something that I never thought was possible: my first finisher's medal.

Shortly after this, injury struck: I sprained my ankle badly whilst at work. During this time of injury I discovered just how much I loved being a runner and a Harrier. This included making a very silly last moment decision to do the Doug Anderson whilst still being injured (lesson well learnt there - not to run when advised against it). The weeks passed and I had already pre booked the Standalone 10k and The Great South Run. Worry started to kick in for both

my races and whether or not I would be able to keep up with the progress that my group was making.

When I was ready to run again the support from every single member of the Harriers community was amazing. In less than 6 weeks back I found myself on the starting line at Standalone Farm. The atmosphere was amazing and I felt ready to go and tackle my first club championship 10k. I had amazing support the whole way round from many Harriers members which was invaluable. Going home with my first race T shirt and a massive smile on my face felt amazing.

Three weeks later it was time for my race of the year: The Great South Run in Portsmouth. Ten miles all around my favourite city. Back in April when I first joined the Harriers I didn't ever imagine that six months later I would be doing a ten metre race let alone ten miles. Needless to say I was full of both excitement and nerves (and porridge). Keeping in mind all the tricks about timings, posture and recovery that all of my coaches had provided me with I had made the start line. In 2 hours 7 minutes and 48 seconds I had done it and both the medal and T-shirt were in hand. Now as a Coached2Run graduate I have joined many different groups to run with and they have made me feel most welcome. I am very much looking forward to tackling new races and continuing to train with the Harriers and enjoying a new year in the Harriers world.

**Jazmine Clark**

