



# Up and Running

19<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Issue 15 - The Chris Leigh Edition

## All I Want for Christmas is a PB!

So... I decided to enter the 2022 Santa 10K race having done this before with some knowledge of the course and preparation work involved. It was held at Millennium Country Park again and last year I surprisingly won the race by a small margin. I came away with a lovely trophy and the biggest one in my entire collection. I knew this year wasn't going to be plain sailing due to the fact that a few more people appeared to be on the entry list and the freezing temperatures.

I warmed up from neighbouring Stewartby with a hooded top and made sure I had plenty of safety pins for the santa suit that we all have to wear. It was nice seeing some familiar faces from Harriers and having a little chat. I was feeling rather relaxed and not nervous for some reason. I decided to stay inside the Forest Centre building for a good 15 minutes to prepare my santa suit, ensuring all the safety pins and rubber bands were in the correct places.

The race started dead on at 10 o'clock and straight away this guy went storming off. He started to fidget with his santa jacket and after not too long, I managed to overtake the guy, because I was well prepared. Then it all went quiet because I was in the



lead. No hearing of footsteps or seeing any shadows behind me. The marshals were good to cheer me on as I ran past them. Things changed somewhat when I reached the turning point at half-way, when I realised there was a runner approximately 20 metres behind me and I thought, 'oh s\*\*t, I'm under a bit of pressure now!'

I continued at the pace I was running, constantly reviewing my race strategy and was still ahead in the game. I decided to up the pace at various points just to make sure I was still ahead. With approximately 150 metres to go before the finish, I decided to check behind me and saw that my closest rival looked like he was continuing at the same pace, and I was



not sure if he was going to sprint. Then, the magic moment came when I thought right... 'this is it, the sprint finish!' I again turned around to check on him and I knew that I had done it.

I won the 6.2-mile race by a tiny 5 second margin. To achieve a new 37:49 PB for the distance and break the course record, this really did brighten up my Christmas. Well done to all the marshals for their support and to everyone who crossed the finish line to achieve their personal goals.

## Dates for the diary

28th January 2023 - **Awards Night**

5th February 2023 - **3 Counties XC - Sharnbrook**

26<sup>th</sup> March 2023 - **Oakley 20 - Entries Open!**

19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - **Doug Anderson 5K**

13<sup>th</sup> August 2023 - **Bedford Triathlon - Entries Open!**

## Club Championship Races

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023 - **Sandy 10 miles**

9<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - **Wellingborough 5 miles**

19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - **DA5K**

24<sup>th</sup> September 2023 - **Standalone 10K**

19<sup>th</sup> November 2023 - **St Neots Half Marathon**

## Multisport Club Championship Races

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023 - **Box End Sprint Triathlon**

10<sup>th</sup> September 2023 - **Vitruvian Middle Distance Triathlon**

## Cross-Country Races

15<sup>th</sup> January 2023 - **Stopsley**

5<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - **Sharnbrook**

## Teamup

We are often asked about accessing group schedules. This can be done via the website using the following link - [https://www.bedfordharriers.co.uk/harriers\\_schedules.asp](https://www.bedfordharriers.co.uk/harriers_schedules.asp)

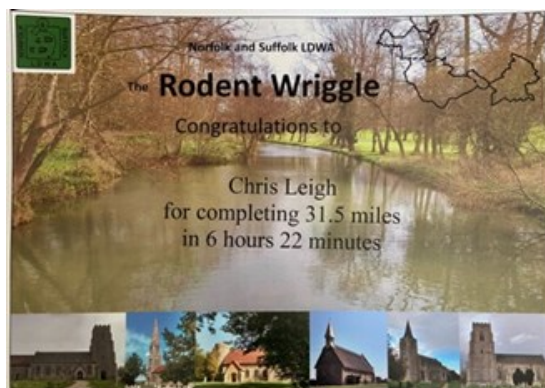
Alternatively, you can download the Teamup app from your device App store. You will need to add this calendar ID into the Teamup app when it prompts for a link - [ksbr33q3hwpp1b4k84](https://www.bedfordharriers.co.uk/harriers_schedules.asp)

## My Marathon Challenge in 2022 - Part 2 - by Chris Leigh

### MAY 2022

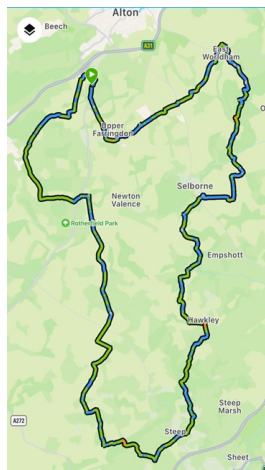
#### Marathon 10 (take 2!) – the Rodent Wriggle (8/5/22)

Sounds disturbing! What's the rodent? Well, this is a reference to the River Rat which features throughout the route on this 31 mile ultra marathon. The sun was out and it was a beautiful day for this run. Starting in Needham Market this self-navigation trail ultra marathon took me through the villages of Creeting St Mary, Creeting St Peter, Great Finborough, Shelland, Rattlesden and Battisford Tye. I saw a total of 10 churches on this pretty route. The trails were in good condition and the 5 checkpoints were well stocked with food and drinks. Another well organised event by the LDWA. I clocked a total of 31.7 miles on the route.



#### Marathon 11 - Mid May Mayhem (15/5/22)

I was really looking forward to this one as it was set in Brandon Country Park, a recent award recipient! I was also relieved that the weather took a slight downward dive on the day after one of the hottest days of the year. This was a truly beautiful setting, but so often that means it can be tough and this was no exception! It was a true trail marathon on sandy trails with plenty of tree roots to duck and dive around, then we were on grass and then the hills – short but very sharp. That was a lap. I just had to do it eight times! After I did, then came the medal and fantastic slice of cake with a cup of coffee. Zig Zag running really know how to put on a running event!



#### Marathon 12 – the Chawton Challenge (21/5/22)

The run started from the beautiful Chawton House on the South Downs. This was a trail run with a twist! You were given a map of the route and then you were off! No detailed route instructions, just OS coordinates for the 6 checkpoints! It was a very warm day, so I was relieved to get to the first checkpoint at about 7 miles only to find out water was not available until checkpoint 2 at 10.5 miles. This pattern repeated itself throughout, so fluids were only available at 10.5, 19 and 26.5 miles. I had to ration myself carefully and the isotonic gels I was using came into their own. The scenery was breath taking with one steep climb of just over 300 feet followed immediately by an equally sharp descent. It was a hilly one! 31 miles of trails and I was proud to say I only missed a couple of turns briefly throughout. The soup and roll and sweet tea at the end were perfect!

#### Marathon number 13 – the LDWA Pick and Mix (29/5/22)

When I started on my challenge this was one of the first events to go on the list. I completed it when it was last run pre-Covid and I also ran the *Anytime* (the virtual version in 2021). Starting from Great Missenden, the event requires you to select a variety of prepared routes of distances ranging from 5 to 12 miles. Each one is colour coded! I started with the purple 8 mile, then blue 5 mile, yellow 6 mile and finally the green 8 miles. The last 8 mile route was my favourite, with beautiful countryside combined with several areas where you could see the forthcoming impact of HS2. In fact, at one point there was a pedestrian crossing through the two main lines that were being built! I would highly recommend this event. I completed 27 miles in a time of 4 hours 57 mins 11 secs.



### JUNE 2022



#### Marathon number 14 – the Zig Zag Jubilee Jamboree (3/6/22)

The day started a little too warm for my liking as I headed for Hinchingsbrooke Country Park for the Jubilee Jamboree trail marathon. The race consisted of 8 laps of the 3.3-mile route around the park, taking in the lovely lakes as well. I struggled a great deal in my head today but was pleased to get it completed in a time of 4 hours 24 mins and 12 secs. What had started as a minor niggle in my right heel was now turning into an Achilles' tendon problem with both feet. The dry and hard trails just made things worse.

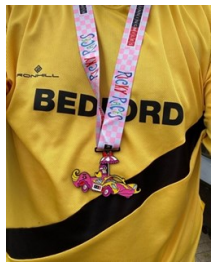
#### Marathon number 15 – Phoenix Running - It's Fri-nally Friday (10/6/22)

The sun definitely came out at Walton-on-the-Thames as I took on marathon 15 of 2022. It was Phoenix Runnings *It's Fri-nally Friday Run*. The marathon consisted of 8 laps on the West route along the Thames with the characteristic blue bridge crossing by the marina. We were treated to a number of swans splashing around as well as the usual band of rowers training along that stretch of the Thames. I was pleased to record a time of 4 hours 24 mins 35 seconds. The massages, stretches and strengthening of my feet and calves was having some effects as my feet and heels were only painful from about 18 miles. Rest, more work with the massage gun and then on to the next one!

### **Marathon number 16 – the Farthingstone Footfest (18/6/22)**

Set in a beautiful part of Northamptonshire, the run started from the Village Hall and consisted of a figure of 8 with a 15-mile clockwise east facing loop that returned to the Village Hall before completing an 11-mile anti-clockwise west facing loop. This was a traditional off road trail marathon that passed through a total of 6 checkpoints en route. Only about 1 mile was on road. The highlight of the run was definitely the 5 mile stretch along the canal.

After passing through the first checkpoint at 3.5 miles I started to get an allergic reaction which brought a rash out on my legs and then I felt my chest tightening and I began to wheeze. Shortly after that my throat started to tighten. I have had reactions to grasses and bramble before, so I had planned ahead and brought Piriton in my bag. It took until mile 10 to have a positive effect on my breathing. A further dose resulted in my breathing easing by mile 15. I decided to carry on! I'm glad to say the second part of the run was less eventful!!! The difficulties in the first half slowed me down considerably and I finished in a time of 6 hours 15 mins.

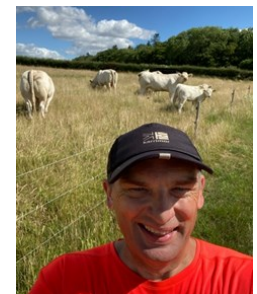


### **Marathon number 17 – Running miles Ricky Races (23/6/22)**

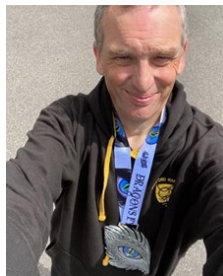
Held at Rickmansworth Aquadrome, this marathon consisted of 8 x 3.25-mile circuits around the beautiful aquadrome. This was in a series of 4 races in 2022 based in the Wacky Races cartoon series. I had completed the first in April and they had super themed medals. Today's race had the Penelope Pitstop medal! As I had another marathon three days after, I used the Jeff Galloway run:walk:run approach with 3 mins running and 1 min walking. It felt good and, whilst I was tired in the final two laps, I didn't suffer too badly from the plantar fasciitis on my right foot. I was pleased with a finishing time of 4 hours 20mins and 12 secs.

### **Marathon number 18 – the Herts Hobble (26/6/22)**

It was a beautiful sunny day for the Herts Hobble marathon. Starting from Buntingford this was a self-navigating off-road marathon with three check points at Anstey, Barley and Reed. There were a few challenging parts to the route, with the highlight being at about 8 miles where I had to go through a kissing gate and cross a field diagonally. The sign on the metal kissing gate said 'Take care. Bull in field.' The herd of cows with the bull were covering the exit gate too! Careful steps towards the herd led to them gradually moving aside but not without a few protests! Temperatures continued to rise during the run, but the well-stocked checkpoints dealt with that.



## **JULY 2022**



### **Marathon number 19 – Phoenix Summer Friday marathon (1/7/22)**

A journey to Walton-on-the-Thames in the sunshine gave me the opportunity to run this marathon along the Thames towpath. Using 8 x 3.3-mile laps I completed the run in a time of 4 hours 40 mins 21 secs. The Phoenix Events are on a smaller scale but still pack a punch, with great medals and a well stocked sweets and treats stand at the start/finish of each lap.

### **Marathon number 20 - The Shocking Shirt Shuffle (10/7/22)**

The biggest challenge for this marathon was the heat. It started at 25°C and was soon touching 30°C! Fortunately, half of the course at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park did have some shade in the wooded areas but the other half was open. I started slower and made sure I was well hydrated. The organisers gave out ice lollies at the halfway point, which was a lovely touch! Pleased to finish in 4 hours 36 mins 4 seconds. Unfortunately, I did take a tumble on a tree root about halfway around my 6<sup>th</sup> lap. A slightly scraped knee seemed to be the worst of it until I got home. Once the adrenalin stopped pumping, I could feel a bruised knee and chest.

### **Marathon 21 – Saturn Day 1 of the Ten in Ten (15/7/22)**

A drive to Runnymede on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July gave me the opportunity to run a marathon at the Saturn Running Ten in Ten Day 1 event. It was a beautiful sunny day and the route along the towpath took full advantage of a short westward and longer eastward loop. We were able to take full advantage of shadier spots in the second half of the run. My bruised chest made breathing deeply very painful at first and this limited my running speed, however, painkillers helped, and the pain eased in the second half. Another great medal with distance pin and goody bag made the journey home easier. Grabbing an ice cream cone at the café before setting off also helped!

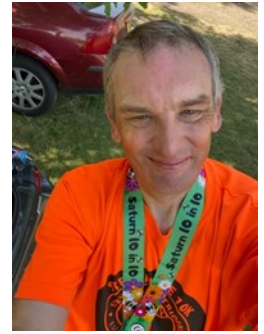


### **Marathon number 22 – The Fairlands Valley Challenge trail marathon (17/7/22)**

It was a hot one for this self navigation trail marathon. The organisers switched the usual single loop marathon to two laps of the half marathon route and an earlier start time. A good call as the temperatures rose considerably in the second half of the run. The regular drink stations and the added bonus of an ice pop on the second lap made this more enjoyable. I must have got through at least 6 litres of fluid on the run!!!

### **Marathon number 23 – Saturn Ten in Ten Day 5 trail marathon (19/7/22)**

With temperatures forecast to rise to 39 °C by midday, Saturn Running went the extra mile (or a thousand!) by setting up in time for a 4:15am start! Yes 4:15am! Game on I said! I started in the dark, but I was barely half a lap in before the light came through. It was lovely to see the sun rise over the Thames and the route was beautiful with all the wildlife. I made the most of the early start and was on my last two laps (of eight) before it moved into the low 30°C. The ice pops came out and I got further relief from a neck buff doused in water every half a lap. The cake and chocolate treats at the end were great as was the ice cream from the nearby café!



### **Marathon number 24 – Running Miles Sundae challenge (21/7/22)**



With lower temperatures, this run was much more comfortable and along a very pretty part of the Jubilee River between Slough and Dorney. Running Miles looked after us with regular ice lollies and iced water too! Marathon 24 of 2022 was also my 26<sup>th</sup> marathon in the last 12 months and I treated myself to a new running top to advertise the milestone! Now, two full days of rest before the next one!!!

### **Marathon number 25 – Saturn Ten in Ten Day 10 (24/7/22)**

A very warm one today!!!! Marathon number 83 and number 25 in 2022. This was the Saturn Running Day 10 of the Ten in Ten series at Staines on Thames. A lovely route along the Thames towpath although literally no shade. The first half of the marathon went well but the heat hit me in the second half. To be honest this was my 5th marathon in 9 days and I was fatigued. That's my excuse!!!! Anyway, 4 days with no marathon. Yippeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!!

### **Marathon number 26 – Phoenix Freaky Friday! (29/7/22)**

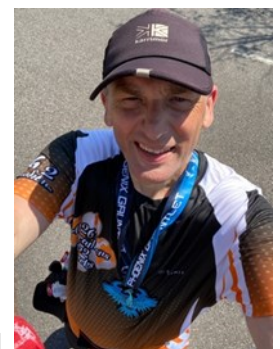
Another very warm one today!!! I started at 7am and I had finished just under half of the marathon before the sun really took over! We had some lovely shade on the east facing route today PLUS Phoenix Running kept us topped up with ICE LOLLIES!!!! Yahhhhhhhhh!!!! That's number 26 for this year (I'm halfway!) and my 84th attended marathon (99 overall). I'm now looking forward to doing my first two back-to-back marathons next Friday/Saturday!!!! It's a year full of landmarks!!!

### **AUGUST 2022**

It's been over 5 weeks since my tumble at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park at the Shocking Shirt Shuffle marathon, but my chest is still painful. I've come to the conclusion that I probably cracked a rib and that has been making deeper breathing more painful. In turn that has limited my pace. Time is a healer!

### **Marathon number 27 – Saturn Running Flying S trail marathon (5/8/22)**

This was the first of two back-to-back marathons, something I had never done before. I didn't want to overdo things today to then struggle tomorrow! The run was at the Runnymede circuit which is a lovely 3.4 mile out and back from Runnymede to the Staines bridge, turning and returning, with 8 laps to complete. I started at 8am and for the first few laps the temperature was reasonable with a light breeze. Once the breeze stopped and the sun appeared things changed for the hotter!!! Nevertheless, I managed a consistent pace and finished strongly, ready for tomorrow's marathon! The ribs on the left side of my chest are improving but still restricting any deep breathing.



### **Marathon number 28 - Phoenix Summer marathon (6/8/22)**

This was my first back-to-back marathon! What an experience. It was a warm day and I had struggled to properly rehydrate from the day before. That led to 4 toilet stops in the second half of the race! Despite that I thoroughly enjoyed this run along the Thames towpath at Walton-on-the-Thames. Now I have five recovery days before the next marathon! Joy!!!

### **Marathon number 29 – Phoenix the Tutti Fruitti marathon (12/8/22)**

The sun was out at Walton-on-the-Thames even at 6:15am when I started! I completed 2 of the 8 x 3.3 mile laps before I really felt the temperature rise. The humidity was high and that had a sapping effect. Nevertheless, Phoenix had us well supported with frozen water, ice lollies and the vast array of drinks, energy supplements and sweets! The rib that I cracked at the Shocking Shirt Shuffle is improving but still not 100%. I managed to finish today's run in the quickest time since I had that fall. Another few weeks and I should be fully fit!

### **Marathon number 30 – the LDWA Birmingham Canal Center**

This involved my longest round trip for a marathon this year. The weather forecast was for temperatures as high as 37°C and high humidity, a difficult combination. I set off very early and arrived ready for an 8:30am start. It was warm but became increasingly hotter as I progressed. With 5 checkpoints and a self-navigation route, there was ample opportunity for fluid top ups as well as some sweet and savoury treats. Unfortunately, there was very little shade, particularly between 7 and 20 miles. Then I spotted the lady selling ice creams from her canal boat at mile 21!! An absolute angel!!! I wish I had bought two!! Despite following the route instructions and gpx without straying, I clocked up 27.53 miles! Birmingham has more miles of canals than Venice and I saw some of the best stretches today. It was great to see how much was being used too.