

## Roadhogg News

### LRRL 2018

2017 was a bitter-sweet year for Roadhogs; our first-ever league title, won by our amazing lady vets, was coupled with a first-ever relegation to Division 3 for our men's teams. So what would 2018 hold? The sacrifices required for that league triumph had been too great for there to be any prospect of a repeat but another season in the top flight seemed worth fighting for. With Jackie and Charlotte battling injuries to lead the fight and excellent back-up from several others, including Janet, Aruna, Jeanette, Julie and Cath, we rallied to finish 5<sup>th</sup> out of 8. Our senior ladies, led by Leah performed well throughout the season and finished a comfortable 4<sup>th</sup> of 8 in Division 2.

Our men's task of bouncing straight back was made more difficult by the awakening of a sleeping giant in the form of OWLs. For many years, only a couple of their members had done league races with any regularity, with others dipping in occasionally when it suited their schedule. It was a surprise therefore, to see a full team complete the first race of the season. Their speed on the ground meant that provided they competed in the keyboard battle to secure the necessary



August, Sept 2018



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### SHORTS

A warm welcome to Gem and Mat, our newest recruits. Congratulations to Sam and Maria on the birth of Erica Niamh

Club Dinner: 24th Nov

Picture credits: Les Brewin, Chris Upton, Stephen Lee.

8 entries in each race, the senior divisional title was sewn up. That left us scrapping with Racehub to be best of the rest. Despite Racehub declining to take their eye off the ball during the summer, a time when triathletes tend to concentrate on their primary sport, we managed to all but secure promotion by the time we reached the final race. Our effort was spearheaded by Mark and Gurmit, with lots of others chipping in here and there.

Our veteran men were in a season long battle with Hinckley for the division 3 title. In the end, two poor races (Desford and Kibworth) proved the difference and we were runners up. Our most consistent performers were Terry, Marc, Harry and Dave.

On the individual front, Jackie's efforts were rewarded with 2<sup>nd</sup> V50 and Charlotte 3<sup>rd</sup> V45.

## LRRL Stats

55 people ran

200 race finishes

Most finishers (26): Carl Rutt 10K and John Fraser 10

Least finishers (17): Kibworth 6

Senior Ladies: 4/8 Division 2, B 4/18 Division 2

Senior Men: 2/12 Division 3, B 6/10 Division 1

Vet Ladies: 5/8 Division 1, B 9/10 Division 1

Vet Men: 2/12 Division 3, B 9/10 Division 1

Mixed: 7/8 Division 1

Highest male finisher: Mark 22<sup>nd</sup>

Highest female finisher: Charlotte 12<sup>th</sup>

Most races (9): Andrew and Dave



## Brian's Bit

### Leicester—Loughborough Canal Run

I expect that you will have seen the photos in the Leicester Runners Facebook page of the early group enjoying a companionable run at 8.30 - 10 minutes a mile pace for the 16 ½ mile run along the canal tow-path to Loughborough. My experience of the later group, meeting at 10.30, was somewhat different. There were only six of us plus Ben, the organiser. I had noted in Facebook that I would be running at 12 - 12.30

pace and was told no one would be left behind. At the start I told Ben that I would also be “Jeffing” and he said that was OK. We set off together but within less than 5 minutes the rest had disappeared from sight, never to be seen again, leaving me with a long lonely run to Loughborough.

Ben had also said that navigation was straightforward, just follow the canal, with the exception of Watermead Park, where there are numerous paths to take. He had said that he would double back to ensure people knew the way through, but I never saw him and relied on the Leicester Marathon route to take me out of the park and onto the canal path. At least there are a few pubs with toilets on the route and they will also fill up water bottles.

Plodding along the path a number of dogs barked aggressively at me, “because you’re wearing yellow” said the owners, without apology. Had I uttered my response it would have been unprintable. Somewhat later, to my horror, I saw a herd of black cattle totally blocking the path by a gate, with no other way through. It took me fifteen minutes of shouting, clapping my hands, and finally singing to the creatures to get them to move a little. Gingerly, I crept by them and on to the path, without mishap.

Finally, I arrived at Loughborough station, which is alongside the canal, only to discover that a major lineside fire resulted in an hour’s wait for the return train. A good thing that I was not going North to Nottingham as all trains in that direction were cancelled. I am used to running long distances on my own, but if you need company for this run make sure you can manage a decent pace for 16 miles or so.

## **LRRL Reports**

### **Huncote**

This was the 25th running of the Joy Cann 5; named in memory of a talented Huncote runner who died tragically young. From a personal perspective it was my 16th year of running the race (and anniversary of my Roadhogs debut). Coming in the middle of a very hot spell, we were lucky that temperatures had moderated and there was a cooling breeze. Over the years, the race has always attracted a strong field and this evening was no exception.

The start is a little narrow and when combined with a strong field and a short race distance, things are a bit tricky at first. Most of the first mile is flat or downhill so many people go out fast. The cavalry charge starts to slow as the road starts to rise after the railway bridge and then turns to climb up Hardwicke Road. Although the hill is not long it does tend to bring people up short. From then on it’s fairly flat with just the sort of



Leah has had a great year

slight inclines that you only notice if you've over-committed.

For once, Mark (45th) managed to avoid being 'Gurminated'. Brhane and Ian A however, were comprehensively 'Lodwicked' in the final run in. Nonetheless, Brhane's run was a triumph after his pacing problems at Prestwold; a whole 2.5 minutes per mile quicker. Ian's run too was a great debut, considering he had been doubtful about running at all. Jackie produced a classy piece to running to be next Hogg home, followed by the trio of Terry, Leah and Harry. Harry was fourth vet and both he and Leah had PBs to show for their evening's work.

Skipper Tom had a good solid run, leading home Andrew (PB), Steve P, Dave B and Stevie (PB). It was great to see George back racing again and he will have been encouraged by his time. Aruna was close to a PB and Marcus will soon have the improving Ian L in his rear-view mirrors. There was further good Hoggette representation from Janet, Jeannette, Valerie, Jade and Usha before Brian rounded off our finishers.

We also managed to share in some of the generous prize fund with Steve P winning V65 and Jackie and Dave second V50 and V55, respectively.

Carl Rutt 10K

This was the only LRRL race not to sell out in 2018. I suspect this partly due to it falling in the summer holidays but mainly due to the tough nature of the course and the low likelihood of recording a fast time. It was good to see that Roadhogs are made of sterner stuff; not only did we have a good entry, we also had three members making their debuts.

Unexpectedly, race day was slightly damp and pleasantly cool, meaning that the Race Director suddenly had lots of surplus bottles of water to deal with. Mark led us in and was followed by James, who ran really well considering he'd got a PB in the Notts 10, just two days before. Richard ran his first LRRL race of the year, managing to exactly match the time required for a Diamond Standard. Dave L and Jackie both had



Debra and Cath getting to grips with a tough course

strong runs, as did Andy G the first of our debutants. Andy was swiftly followed by Terry, Charlotte, Leah and Harry. Our next bunch were Bharne, Andrew and Dave B. Even though Brhane struggled a bit with an injury he still managed a massive PB. George celebrated his return to form with a PB and Charly impressed on debut with a PB (Post baby) PB. Prab did well on his LRRRL debut while Jeannette and Martin rocked it for the V60s. Our final debutant, Debra (in her first ever race) ran with Cath which seemed to work for both as Cath set a new PB. Valerie and Shaun, both feeling their way back after injury were followed by Jade and Liz. Usha and Brian finished together to bring the curtain down on an excellent day's racing.

As usual, the water station was close to Mount St Bernard Abbey; as far as I'm aware though, no one succumbed to the temptation to pop into the Abbey shop for a bottle of their newly launched Trappist ale (Tynt Meadow), but I can thoroughly recommend it (the beer, not stopping mid-race!).

## **On the Fell**

### Ashover (6 miles/1100ft)

It sometimes seems like every village in the Peaks has its own race. In the week leading up to Great Hucklow you could have raced virtually every night. Most races are run under the auspices of the FRA but occasionally you get one like Ashover that flies under the radar. Advertised through Facebook, it was billed as a timed social run with a 'suggested donation' rather than an entry fee but it was definitely a full-on race. I'd woken up with cramp the previous night (the sort where you feel like the alien is suddenly going to erupt from your leg) and my calves were feeling a bit battered, so I was quite apprehensive but the lure of the race was too strong to prompt me to do the sensible thing and stay at home.

As we lined up for the start, the guy next to me told me that he'd gone wrong the previous year and ended up doing extra mileage (these proved to be prophetic words). We started on a narrow track but the field was small and things soon opened up as we started the first climb. We soon emerged in a little patch of moorland and the loop round the top proved just long enough to avoid two-way traffic as we descended on the same path. After a long downhill, things flattened out and running suddenly became more of an effort. The legs soon felt a little better and I managed to make up a few places before finding myself in a more competitive group. The course was very convoluted and quite closed in, making it difficult to follow in places.

As we skirted a quarry, the peace was disturbed by the sound of angry buzzing and several runners complained of being stung. Fortunately, I emerged unscathed. I was starting to struggle on the twisty climb through thick bracken and lost touch with the others. As I, now reduced to walking, neared the top I had collected a fan club of flies buzzing round my head. Thus incentivised and buoyed by the prospect of some downhill I got going again, remade contact with the group, and by the time we reached the valley had made it to the front.

As we started the last mile I made a big push to catch up with the runner in front. I caught him at the top of a steep rocky section and while we were both concentrating on staying on our feet, at full pace, we both missed a sharp turn and carried straight on down the hill. I began to become concerned at the absence of red and white tape but by the time I was sure I must have gone wrong it was far too late (and far too steep a hill) for me to go back. The path came out in the village and I walked in, intending to declare myself a DNF (fell races are very particular about accounting for everyone, so you can't just slope off). The point where I re-joined the real course was being marshalled by the race director and when he spotted me he told me to finish, saying that several others had also gone off course and had finished. He was insistent but I couldn't bring myself to do it (I later worked out that I'd probably cut 0.2 of a mile) until I'd waited a while and seen a couple of guys who I knew had been behind me. Knowing that I'd given up any advantage gained by my error made me feel better and I was able to confirm this later by comparing Strava traces. Interestingly, I could also confirm that three runners in front of me had made exactly the same error.

30/115

## Hathersage Gala (4.5 miles/1066ft)

Monday seemed a bit of an unusual night for a race but I was free and therefore not complaining. Hathersage is a long way to go for 4.5 miles but they packed in 1000ft of climb and it looked like a good course. For once, the M1 was kind and I bagged one of the early race numbers. Evening races within easy reach of Sheffield tend to be popular (and competitive) and by the time we were walked to the start, I was one of 250. The village sits right at the foot of the fell and you are climbing straight from the gun. The first bit is up the road and the gradient soon thinned us out sufficiently that I only experienced minor delays when it got narrower after we turned off into the woods. After about 400ft of climb we got a little respite and after that the gradient wasn't so full on until we reached Higger Tor.

As we climbed the Tor, we scrambled over huge gritstone boulders and then had the challenge of trying to run hard over a landscape scattered with huge slabs of rock. The descent proper proved to be a great battle with places being exchanged frequently as people found a better line or put in a surge. Although it was nearly all down, there were a couple of small bumps to get over, which served to remind us just how tired

we were. The final half mile was on tarmac and as we reached the school where the race was based, the gradient became so steep that it took a supreme act of faith to keep the legs spinning and avoid putting the brakes on. It obviously worked because from having a clear road in front, and concentrating on staying away, I suddenly had a target in sight. There was a cheeky, traveller-style climb as we entered the school grounds and by the top of it we were level pegging and able to spend the final 50m sprinting like there was an Olympic medal at stake (rather than just the somewhat meaningless honour of 63rd place). 63/247



## Brooksie's Bash

Brooksie's bash started life as an club trail run and became a proper race in 2016. It starts and finishes in the grounds of Foremarke Hall (Prep school for Repton) and takes in some very pleasant, undulating, NW Leicestershire countryside. Brian and I did the inaugural race, Janet the second and this year I had Leah to help me fly the Roadhogg flag. It was a hot day and the ground was baked hard. I warmed up around the immaculate sports fields and then settled down in the shade to await the start. Although the race was organised by the eponymous Brooksie's trail running company (Peak Running), there was a strong contingent from his club; Shelton Striders. There were also plenty of Barrow Runners because the race had been designated as part of their club championship.



Although the race has a relaxed ethos, the front part of the field set a fast pace and there was some good racing. Everything went smoothly until I got to a tree plantation and noticed a couple of runners had stopped and were looking confused. Even though I'd run the course before I had made sure to check the course map for this section (one forestry road looks very like another) so I just pointed in the correct di-

rection and kept running. A couple of minutes later a lady who had passed me earlier came past again and berated a marshal about having been sent the wrong way. I was soon passed by a couple more, faster looking, runners and started to think that maybe karma was repaying me for Ashover.

It wasn't until the next day that I learned that someone had deliberately changed the direction of an arrow and sent all of the front runners off course. Looking at Strava afterwards, the leader had lost at least 6 minutes. Apparently, when he got back on track he turned the offending arrow to point the right way before proceeding to win the race all over again. Chair of the UK netrunner virtual running club and clearly a true gentleman, it was a considerable shock to read that he passed away just three weeks after the race.

Having avoided the drama, I had a strong finish and came in in a very respectable 16th place; most of those in front who had gone wrong hadn't lost enough time for me to catch them but I probably gained a couple of places from people whose desire to fight to the line had been diminished by their detour. Leah also had an enjoyable morning, finishing 82nd. (16/257)