

Roadhogs Leicester A.C.



March/April 2014

Established 10/08/1984
Affiliated MCAA, LRRL, DRL, RWA.



Trudy Triumphs

Trudy achieved a personal milestone with her first Marathon on Saturday in the beautiful Vale of Belvoir. Seen here with grizzled veteran of 65 Marathons, Jon Heap, she debuted over the classic distance in one of the hardest races in the county. It was a beautiful spring-like day but there was plenty of ankle-deep mud and more puddles than a puppy in training; just staying upright was a challenge in itself.

Read her story on page 2.

LRRL 2014

Winter League

16th March Stilton 7
6th April Desford
18th May West End 8

Summer League

8th June Swithland 6
22nd June Prestwold 10K
2nd July Hungarton 7
20th July Hermitage 10K
6th August Huncote
7th September John Fraser 10

Jerry's 100 Mile Challenge

We have some remarkable people in our club and one of them has set himself an amazing challenge; Jerry is planning to run the whole of the Leicestershire Round footpath in just 24 hours. Not surprisingly, this has caught the imagination of several fellow members and already, plans are being made for people to run sections with him, man the back-up team and generally provide encouragement and assistance.

Jerry will be raising money for Childline and The Bodie Hodges Foundation, a charity who are aiming to establish a holiday home to be used by families who've lost a child.

Make sure you put 12th/13th July in your diaries.

Member News

This time we are pleased to welcome Rebecca and James Bostock, Chris Haward, Ben Milsom, Stuart McMillan and, joining the club for a second time, James O'Rawe.

Derby Runner Individual Results

With the final race only counting for the team competition, the final individual standings have been calculated. Vicky Sutton was our highest placed senior lady in 14th, with Amy in 25th. Ruth was 16th V40 and Trudy 29th. Nick was 5th senior man, with Sam 32nd and Steve R 42nd. Steve W was 30th V40. Dale was 10th V50, with Dave 20th and Hitesh 28th.

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Picture credits: Dave Lodwick, John Stew, Valerie Spezi.

A First Marathon Journey

(Well, if X factor contestants can go on a journey, surely a Marathon runner can?)

My journey began at one of my first LRRL league races (Wolvey, Feb 2008). "How do you fancy running the Snowdonia marathon in October", I was asked. "Sure, sounds like fun", I replied. I had run no further than 10k at that point, and was still at the getting better stage of my running career (as opposed to the getting slower stage!). John had run a couple of Marathons by this point, so if he could do it, how hard could it be? I was duly entered and looked forward to a sociable weekend in Wales.



I can't believe I've let him persuade me!

John had joined Roadhogs the previous year and I had watched in disbelief as he (a former TV watching, spectator sport only couch potato) went out running in all weathers, and came back from cross country races covered in mud and frozen to the marrow. Eventually I started going for a jog along the canal, slowly made it to 3 miles and decided to let John enter me for the Barrow Boxing day handicap. I should state that when I entered I was barely managing 10 minute miles, but to John's everlasting disgust had improved so much by race day that (thanks to my appallingly inaccurate handicap time) I managed to be first lady home and got a mention in the Mercury. He has never forgiven me for that!

A few days later I ran the Huncote Hash, and my love of cross country was born. Actually, that's not quite true - I bought some cross country shoes for the Hash and felt I needed to get my money's worth out of them. But I did start to enjoy it eventually! I ran all the LRRL races that year and did a couple of half marathons. I soon realised that whilst 13 miles was do-able on

fairly minimal training, the Snowdonia marathon was not. So I went for the sociable weekend, handed out jelly babies but did not run.

A couple of years went by. John was striving for a sub 4 hour marathon and hadn't yet discovered the 100 Marathon Club. I grew to enjoy the half Marathon distance and thought I really should attempt a full Marathon now. I had previously run the half at Nottingham; in 2010 I decided to do the full. I did try. I increased my long runs, pounding the canal and the streets mainly on my own, getting a bit fed up, but sticking at it. Then one warm July day, I did 18 miles and hated every step. I came home, showered and didn't run again until the OWLs 10 in September. I did run Nottingham, but just the half, and pretty slowly. Marathons were not for me, I decided.



Hinckley 2011: Before the wheels came off

May 2011, Hinckley Half Marathon wasn't a league race, but I still wanted a PB. I had (amazingly for me) actually trained for it. I had been doing lots of long runs, including my favourite 13 mile route from home, along the canal to Watermead Park. With hindsight, a flat canal route maybe wasn't the best preparation for a fairly hilly half. On the start line I was feeling confident. I remember telling my fellow Hogs that my training had gone so well that I was considering stepping up to full Marathon distance for Leicester in October. And indeed, my run did go well. I was well on track for my best ever half Marathon time - but, as many of you know, it was not to be.

With half a mile to go, I was bouncing off the hawthorn hedge, with people telling me to stop. I didn't want to stop; I was going to get a PB.

Luckily, someone caught me before I crashed to the ground. He had finished his race and was waiting for his wife to come by. He spent the time looking after me whilst I was very sick, looked like death and was talking more nonsense than after several cocktails on a Hoggettes night out. Whilst I was lying in the gutter many runners, Roadhogs and from other clubs, stopped to see if I was OK. I assured them that I was fine and I would be up and finishing the race shortly. I actually travelled that last half mile in the back of an ambulance.

Once the ambulance crew released me, I realised just how fantastic the running community is. So many people helped me that day. I was still a bit foggy, so I don't really know who did what, but several Hoggettes and Liz & Chris from Birstall helped me to change out of my soggy running clothes. Dave L drove me and my car home, someone else took his bike home. That evening I had a call from the Hinckley Running Club to see how I was doing, and I had to ask Dave to send out an email to reassure everyone that, apart from being very embarrassed, I was fine. I should note that John was running a Marathon that day (surprise!) and his only contribution was to get me in trouble with my mother by telling her I had ended up in an ambulance.



10 miles in and still smiling

Marathon running was once again off the agenda. I ran lots of half Marathons, and frequently told people that whilst I enjoyed them, I never finished and wanted to do it again. John was now well into his 100 Marathon target, running 2 or more a month sometimes. Did this make me want to join him? In a word - NO! Some people seem to think that running multiple Marathons is a virus you can catch, I am not so sure. If it is, I seem to be immune!

During the summer of 2012 I didn't run much - I was injured but I also spent many hours on the sofa watching the Olympics. Fantastic viewing but I am afraid it did not inspire me to actually do any exercise - I might have missed something. But eventually I dug out my trainers and began to run again.

I was not getting PBs at this stage and it was always a relief when enough ladies turned up at races that my score didn't count for the team, but I was enjoying my running. I managed another LRRL 100% in 2013 and ran some half marathons. I still didn't fancy plodding around 26 miles of roads, but hearing John talk about some of the trail Marathons he had done, I mentioned that they sounded more interesting. Varied terrain, beautiful countryside, a little mud maybe but most importantly to me - absolutely no time pressure as it is very difficult to predict a time when you have no idea of the conditions you will face during the race. However I was paranoid about getting lost as I have zero sense of direction and still get lost running around the streets I have lived most of my life (those people that know me well will tell you that is no exaggeration!). So, with a firm promise from John that he would not leave me or let me get lost, in December 2013 I entered the Belvoir Challenge with 10 weeks to get marathon fit.



Saturday morning runs with Natasha

And so began my brilliant Saturday morning runs with Coach Valerie. Different people joined us for different distances, but every Saturday, during the wettest 3 months on record, the sun shone whilst we ran, providing we got up early enough. For the last few weeks, Valerie was injured but she still came out with us on her

bike. By this point it was just me and Natasha (who was training for a half Marathon to take place on the same weekend as my Marathon) but we steadily increased our distances, fought against gale force winds and chatted about running and life in general. All the time, Valerie was there on her bike, shouting encouragement, taking photos and lying about how many hills were left to run. One Saturday I came home, very pleased with myself for running 22 miles in 3 hours 35minutes. Hmm, I muttered out loud to myself, maybe I could do a road Marathon? Ten minutes later, John announced that he had entered me for the Shakespeare Marathon in April. It is very dangerous to express sentiments like that in our house!

A couple more long runs, a league race and cross country later, Marathon day arrived. The Belvoir Challenge offers a 26 or 15 mile option for walkers and runners. John S, Jon Heap, Dave L and Jerry and I (along with Dale who was doing the 15 mile run) lined up at the start. It was a glorious day and I was actually looking forward to the run as for once I felt that I had trained properly. The other Roadhogs set off, leaving John, Jon and me to make a slightly slower start. The mud started after about 400 yards but John assured us that this would soon improve, and indeed had opted for road shoes. He lied, and wore the wrong shoes!

Despite all the varieties of mud (deep, sticky, sloppy etc), I would recommend this race. The scenery is stunning, the checkpoints every 5 miles are more like all you can eat buffet tables and everybody is really friendly. After 13 miles, Jon was struggling with an ankle injury so they encouraged me to run ahead. At the next checkpoint, after leaving a message for them that I wasn't lost, I was encouraged by a lady from Shelton Striders to dump the boys and carry on. Louise and I encouraged each other to the next check point, both of us having some knee issues by this point. She knows the area well and gave me a guided tour as we ran, including the marital status and living arrangements of the castle owners! When I had checked out the route earlier, I was looking forward to the downhill finish, however by this point all down slopes were agonising to my left knee. Not good.

Then, as I rounded the corner to last checkpoint I saw Coach Valerie (along with Ludo who she had brought along to protect her in case of cows!). She is not a cross country fan but had run 4 miles through mud to support me at the

end of my first marathon. What a hero. She allowed me to limp and swear down the steep lane, then assured me I only had to run through one more field. She assured me of this at least 6 times!!! But have to give her credit for my finish time (5.58.18) as I am sure I would have taken those last 2 miles considerably slower without her.



Coach Valerie 'Salazar' Spezi tells Trudy to sprint for the line

So ended my first marathon, 6 years after I first thought about it! Completed with help and advice from lots of runners from Roadhogs and other clubs, with especial thanks to Valerie and Natasha (who also got a PB that weekend at Reading Half - well done Natasha) for making my long training runs so much more fun than plodding the streets alone. Anyone reading this who has yet to attempt a marathon, never say never, and choose a race that interests you, even if people tell you that a trail marathon is not a usual first choice. After all, any race with cake can't be all bad!

Ps Yes I am running another marathon next month, and no, I have no intention of joining the 100 marathon club - ever!

Cancelled Races

At time of writing, we've lost two league races and come close to losing a third. This has caused a lot of confusion and a certain amount of ill-informed comment. Road running in Leicestershire has been operating somewhat under the radar for a long time. Odd races, like Swithland and Rothley have been forced to implement road closures but everyone else has

carried on as before. Although the legislative environment hasn't changed in recent years, the level of scrutiny has. The insurers who provide our public liability cover expect high levels of risk control. Our laws are very firm about anything that impedes the flow of traffic; race marshals have no authority to stop or direct traffic and even police officers have surprisingly limited powers in this area (the days of the local police officer stepping in to help community events are sadly gone). Our sport has grown in popularity and at the same time traffic volumes have increased while motorists' tolerance of even the slightest delay seems to have evaporated. As runners we are more risk-tolerant than most; after all, the freedom to just lace up our trainers and run wherever we want is one of the things that attracts us. However, risks we may gladly accept for ourselves cannot be accepted on our behalf by race organisers, councils, the police or UKA. It is also true that our individual assessment of risk tends to be different in a race situation where there are places and PBs at stake.

District councils are now asking the county Event Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to look at event safety. This group are sympathetic to road running but they are open to scrutiny (and legal challenge), so they can't just turn a blind eye to poor practice. The issues with Barrow probably could have been solved if the club had addressed them earlier. Ashby, on the other hand, is simply a dangerous course that can't be brought up to modern standards; the proverbial accident waiting to happen. I can't say that there won't be more mishaps while clubs adjust to the new ways of doing things, but hopefully things will soon settle into a new pattern. Clubs will have to do much more forward planning and some races may fall by the wayside but there will be opportunities for new courses too.

For the Record

Huncote Hash		
Nick Cobley	10th	45.16
Sam Jolly	50th	49.47
Jerry Wilkes	58th	50.27
Dale Jenkins	81st	52.59
Steve Robinson	105th	55.15
John Hallissey	109th	55.41
Chris Peach	119th	56.08
Dave Lodwick	123rd	56.24
Dan Bannatyne	172nd	62.01
Ruth Stevely	181st	63.00
Paul Langham	188th	63.29

Amy Gasper	194th	63.41
Afra Kelsall	214th	65.31
Ian Bass	235th	67.42
John Stew	301st	73.13
Rich Norton	305th	73.43
Trudy Sharpe	312th	74.26
Furzton Enigma		
John Stew	29th	4.40.06
Parkrun 11/1/14		
Mike Stewart	51st	22.05
Matt Pitt	128th	24.44
Baz Barratt	145th	25.24
Cold Christmas to Good Easter Marathon		
Jon Heap	90th	6.34.28
John Stew	91st	6.34.28
Parkrun 25/1/14		
Ben Milsom	114th	24.03
Ian Bass	133rd	24.43
Parkrun 1/2/14		
Dave Bullivant	45th	21.41(PB)
Peddar's Way Ultra (47m)		
Chris Peach	26th	8.26.29
Tigger Tor		
James Bostock	31st	1.24.32
Becca Bostock	207th	1.50.02
Charnwood Hills		
Nick Cobley	18th	1.45.21
Jerry Wilkes	66th	1.56.50
Dale Jenkins	108th	2.04.48
Jackie Brown	169th	2.13.20
Steve Wheeler	257th	2.27.50
Paul Langham	299th	2.34.56
Hitesh Pandya	309th	2.36.33
Parkrun 8/2/14		
Nathan Smith	62nd	22.47
Parkrun 15/2/14		
Mike Stewart	34th	22.09
Matt Pitt	71st	24.19
Ben Milsom	82nd	25.00
St Valentine's 30K		
Will Carter	93rd	2.09.54
Rae Clark	204th	2.25.16
Parkrun 22/2/14		
Nathan Smith	58th	21.29(PB)
Ben Milsom	117th	23.28
Parkrun 1/3/14		
Ben Milsom	80th	22.47(PB)
Belvoir Challenge (26 mile)		
Jerry Wilkes	11th	3.33.31
Dave Lodwick	88th	4.41.32
Trudy Sharpe	173rd	5.58.18
John Stew	191st	6.26.35
Jon Heap	192nd	6.26.50
Belvoir Challenge (15 mile)		
Dale Jenkins	55th	2.24.38
Reading HM		
Natasha Eastwood	9037th	2.06.40(PB)

Gettin' Muddy with Kim

Derby Runner League Race 4 - Grace Dieu 12/1/14

It was a bright but cold day again and our Transportable Event Needs and Treatments centre was crowded out with 21 Roadhogs. The day before, I watched the Edinburgh International cross country on Saturday, which the GB team won overall thanks mainly to the girls. Then I came to Grace Dieu to watch the Roadhogs girls and men's team give their all once again at the demanding Grace Dieu Prep School course. Grace Dieu was tougher than Edinburgh and would have made better TV; it includes a long hill around halfway which seems to go on for ever and is quite rocky in parts, a couple of stream crossings, and the famous travelator finish. But the Roadhogs rise to these challenges and laugh at them as they run for each other. We welcomed new runners Afra and Becca, and also welcomed comeback runners Bec and Rachel, and everyone made a mental note of where Trudy put down the cakes. Some Roadhogs had trained hard on the Saturday so did especially well to run again on the Sunday: Ludo ran one of his 'Jack Daniels' sessions (long distance with speed training built in) that he learned in the US, Valerie ran her long miles, and Trudy did an 18.5 mile run as part of her training for a trail marathon.



Becca: An impressive debut

The men started 10 minutes before the ladies again, which is a good idea I think where it's possible to do that as it cuts congestion and gives the ladies their own race. Some runners,

including one or two Roadhogs, went off course in the second half because it was badly marked. I will tell Shepshed RC and hope that didn't affect the final positions too much for any club. Sam had an urgent toilet stop but I think he stepped off course for it so hopefully did not scare anyone. Nick got ahead of Ludo but Ludo never gave up the chase. Nick roared as he sprinted up the travelator. Next in for the mens scoring team were young dudes James and Sam, and Jerry who had a good one today. Hitesh was pleased that he beat all of the ladies ... I know they gave him a start but it was still one of his best runs of the season. Jackie and Vicky Sutton had their own race and this time Jackie just had the edge. Next was new girl Becca just ahead of old girl Bec, who was upset as she finished much further back than usual but hey Bec you are coming back from injury again and there is always another race for you. Afra and Ruth followed in close order, though Afra was barged by someone at the finish line which was not very sporting. Then came Rachel, who fell in her comeback race but was not hurt too badly and carried on bravely to the finish. Ashley and Becca both said that they enjoyed the race ... they both married only last year (not to each other) so I think they now appreciate that love and cross country running give you a happy and fulfilling life.



John: A consistent performer over the country

It was all very wet and muddy again after the rains but the club tarp took the punishment and I hosed it down in the garden. I wanted to clean it indoors but Lynne refused to share the shower with it. I should imagine a few runners were hosed down at home as well.

RESULTS

MEN: 12th Nick Coble 33.16, 16th Ludo Renou 33.30, 46th James Dunham 34.47, 110th Sam Jolly 38.01, 126th Jerry Wilkes (V40) 39.30, 132nd John Davies (V40) 39.43, 164th Dale Jenkins (V50) 40.47, 169th Steve Wheeler (V40) 41.04, then no times given for: 209th Drew Simpson, 220th Dave Lodwick (V50), 265th Hitesh Pandya (V50), 339 finished.

LADIES: 36th Jackie Brown (V40) 42.59, 37th Vicki Sutton 43.06, 41st Rebecca Bostock 43.22, 48th Rebecca Bromwich 44.35, 72nd Afra Kelsall 46.30, 78th Ruth Stevely (V40) 47.06, 109th Rachel Clarke 50.25, 118th Ashley Simpson 51.40, 148th Trudy Sharpe (V40) 56.41, 154th Valerie Spezi 59.00, 166 finished.

TEAMS: men (Dvn 2) 4th, ladies (Dvn 2) 3rd, combined (Dvn 1) 8th.

TEAMS AFTER 4 RACES: men (Dvn 2) 5th, ladies (Dvn 2) 4rd, combined (Dvn 1) 9th.

Derby Runner League Race 5 - Bosworth 16/2/14

It was a sunny day at the Bosworth Battlefield Centre, still cold but at least we were having a break from the gales so the refugee village was not blown away. The last time tents were grouped together like this was just before Richard III went into battle 500 years ago. The call went out and Roadhogs came and answered it. Numbers were down compared to the 20-plus we have put out in the league so far this season, with some runners away, injured or on marathon training. But there was no doubt about the determination from every one of our 10 guys and 5 girls who came and raced. On what should have been an easier course but was actually a 5.5 mile bog run after all the rain, the Roadhogs team fought their way round and lifted us from 9th to 8th in the combined division 1 and away from the threat of relegation with just one race to go. Now we start our march towards European Cross ... sorry, I'm getting a bit carried away. Steve R and Barbara returned from their skiing trip only hours earlier, Trudy came along after a 21-mile run the day before, and Jerry set off for Bradgate on a 20-mile run after the race! New girl Becca brought along husband and new guy James in his nice clean yellow shoes, and James was a new star for us as he set off after the leaders and hung on for 9th place in his debut race! His shoes were no longer yellow though. In fact all of the runners came in with legs and shoes covered in mud and it was hard to tell where shoes ended and socks or legs

began. Nick and Sam were next in, then Jerry who had a great race and nearly got to Sam at the finish. Next in close order were Dale and Steve W, then Chris and Steve R also racing each other, and then Dave Lod and Dan. For the girls Vicky Sutton was first home with Becca close behind just like the previous race. Ruth was next with mud on her face, which you would have to pay for in a beauty parlour but in this league you get it for free. Then Amy who combines running with long and difficult working hours these days, and then our very own Trudy.



James: Top 10 quality

Bosworth Battlefield is a good venue with parking close by, a choice of courses and some real toilets. Thanks to Hinckley RC for excellent organisation and marshalling. Trudy's cakes went down well too. If you are not running cross-country for Roadhogs then you are missing out.

RESULTS

MEN: 9th James Bostock 36.02, 24th Nick Coble 37.32, 84th Sam Jolly 42.12, 86th Jerry Wilkes (V40) 42.17, 121st Dale Jenkins (V50) 44.36, 123rd Steve Wheeler (V40) 44.48, 142nd Chris Peach (V40) 46.29, 143rd Steve Robinson 46.36, 146th Dave Lodwick (V50) 47.04, 192nd Dan Bannatyne 51.27, 232 finished.

LADIES: 30th Vicki Sutton 48.57 32nd Rebecca Bostock 49.35, 51st Ruth Stevely (V40) 54.16, 57th Amy Gasper 54.49, 84th Trudy Sharpe (V40) 62.17, 106 finished.

TEAMS: men (dvn 2) 3rd, ladies (dvn 2) 3rd, combined (dvn 1) 7th.

TEAMS AFTER 5 RACES: men (dvn 2) 5th, ladies (dvn 2) 4rd, combined (dvn 1)

8th.

Derby Runner League Race 6 - Holly Hayes 2/3/14

The day started brightly but clouded over through the morning. It felt like a storm was coming to Holly Hayes but in the end we had just some light wind and rain and the stormy weather held off until the afternoon. This course is good for spectators as it's 3 laps which come back through the start and finish area so you can watch the race unfolding. It's also a nicer course for the runners as it's 5+ miles through mainly woodland paths and not very hilly. Some Roadhogs were involved in events on the previous day; Trudy, Dale and Dave Lod all ran the Charnwood Marathon but still came along to support the team. Jerry and John Stew also ran the marathon but came and ran this as well, because they are a little crazy. And Vicki, Nick, Keith and Dan were all at the Roadhogs curry night the previous evening (how much can Nick eat?) at which, after a few beers, Keith decided to make his comeback a few years after his last cross country race.



Keith: A rare sighting on the muddy stuff

We missed a lady vet for the combined team but under league rules you are given a last place once in the season so not much harm done. Vicky was first in, a good run after that curry, with Becca less than a minute behind and improving with each run. Then came Amy, with another top half finish. Amy arrived at the last minute and ran down to the start just as the runners were observing a minute's silence for a Hinckley runner ... she must have thought that they were all waiting patiently for her to arrive before

starting the race. In the men's race, James B had another terrific run, around 10th at half way but picked off one or two in the final lap to finish right up there in 6th. Nick was not happy with his run, he lost some ground and finished 26th but hey Nick anyone else would be thrilled with that and, to be fair, you were full of chicken tikka and heaven knows what else. Next in was John D who managed to get by big Sam in the final lap. Then Steve W who is still improving, and then Jerry, the mile machine, who started easily then worked his way through the field. Chris and Hitesh completed the scoring 8, followed in by Dan, Keith and John S.



Amy enjoying her run through the woods

League organiser Dave Mann ran at the back of the race carrying a leg injury, he fell badly at the brook crossing and banged his head and broke a finger. He was patched up by the medics and still finished the race before being taken to hospital for a check-up. I checked on Monday and he's recovering ok but looking a bit beaten up.

In the end we finished 8th in the top overall division and held our place there, which is a great result for the season. And the men's and ladies teams both finished 4th in their individual second divisions, so the girls matched last season and the men dropped just one place but they improved from 5th going into this race. We presented Trudy with a gift for all the home-made cakes which are so welcomed by the team at every race. Thanks to all the Roadhogs who ran this league, you do the club proud.

RESULTS:

MEN: 6th James Bostock 32.47, 26th Nick Cobley 35.08, 87th John Davies (V40) 38.32, 94th Sam Jolly 38.50, 106th Steve Wheeler (v40) 39.40,

108th Jerry Wilkes (V40) 40.04, 139th Chris Peach (V40) 42.23, 152nd Hitesh Pandya (V50) 43.54, 176th Dan Bannatyne 46.38, 183rd Keith Dakin 47.36, 199th John Stew (V50) 54.38, 206 finished.

LADIES: 27th Vicki Sutton 44.12, 34th Rebecca Bostock 45.03, 54th Amy Gasper 48.05, 106 finished.

TEAMS: men (dvn 2) 4th, ladies (dvn 2) 4th, combined (dvn 1) 4th.

TEAMS AFTER 6 RACES (FINAL POSITIONS): men (dvn 2) 4th, ladies (dvn 2) 4th, combined (dvn 1) 8th.



Sam: Really starting to come good

straight to a main course of hills. Kibworth is certainly the race to find out who over-did the turkey and who had been doing 'secret training'. Happily, it seems like almost everyone fell in to the latter category. We were able to welcome some new faces to the team. James Bostock was previously based in Sheffield and comes with a pedigree in fell racing, so Kibworth should have made him feel at home. James O'Rawe is a former member of the club and one of a group of talented race walkers from the days when Roadhogs were a force in that discipline; like the rest, he is no slouch at running either. Ben Milsom has been training with us for a while and now joins Uncle Mark R as a member of the club. Ferrante Neri has been with us since the autumn having previously run a race or two for West End. Jon Millett has actually been with us for a while but a mix up at Hungarton meant that Kibworth was his first race in a Roadhogg vest.

The competition amongst our fast men has become interesting over the last few months. After a period when only Mike Munday could challenge his pre-eminence, Nick is now being challenged on all sides. This time, with Ludo away loading up on Cornish pasties and clotted cream, it was Mark R going head to head with our most consistent performer. On this occasion, it was Mark (14th) who got the upper hand, leaving Nick (23rd) to fend off the impressive James B (29th). The fast improving James D (50th) made it four in the top fifty and Will (71st) and Sam (94th) impressed, too. It was left to James O (119th) and John D (127th) to round out the top eight.

With the age profile at the front tilting towards the youngsters, we needed Jerry (134th) and Steve W (147th), just finishing ahead of Dale (149th), to complete our veteran four. Debutants Jon (163rd) and Ferrante (168th) held off Chris (171st) who had his usual strong run on the hilly stuff. Next up was Tom (188th), holding off a rejuvenated Hitesh (189th)(who'd obviously swapped his Christmas pud for spinach) and Dave L (191st). Then we had Roger (220th), Dan Ban (224th) and Keith (229th)(going well, despite attempting to eat his weight in pork pies over the festive period). Lee (241st) found it hard going, while young Ben (284th) got his first taste of the LRRL. To round things off, we had John S (293rd) who hasn't quite managed to swap his Marathon habit for speed training yet and Dave S (309th), keeping a watchful eye on the youngsters.

Birthdays

March

10th Mark Chamberlain
10th Steve Martin (V65)
10th Kim Richardson
16th Rich Norton
18th Hitesh Pandya
22nd Craig Atton

April

2nd Rebecca Bostock
6th Tom Martin
6th Mike Munday (V50)
12th Harry Jones
15th Steve Robinson (V40)
23rd Neil Winkless
24th Dave Swan
26th Jackie Brown (V50)
26th James Dunham
30th Jon Heap (V45)

Leicester Running Shop LRRL Winter League, Race 1: Kibworth 6

The opening of the 2014 League campaign dispensed with the hors-d'oeuvres and went

After their heroic feats of 2013, many of our ladies seem to be in bits, but what we lacked in quantity we made up for in quality. There was no 'manager of the month curse' for Vicky Sutton (25th), who celebrated her status as 'most improved runner' by being the first of a well matched trio; Jackie (27th) and the highly impressive Rae (29th), being the other two. Ruth (64th) completed the scoring four and Amy (71st) and our third vet, Alison (153rd), followed her home.

Leicester Running Shop LRRL Winter League, Race 2: Markfield 10K

A bright day and fortunately, the stiff wind was behind us for the long drag up to Markfield. Welcome debuts for Becca Bostock and Vicky Salt helped to bolster our ladies. A synchronisation problem with the chip timing saw everyone awarded a 24 second bonus, so the calling of PBs will have to wait until everything is corrected.

Rae (28th) continued where she left off at Kibworth, storming home as first Hoggette. She was followed by Vicky Sutton (35th) and Becca (60th). Vicky Salt (66th) completed the scoring four, with Ruth (69th) following close behind. Ash (99th), Trudy (104th) and an out of sorts Alison (169th) rounded things off.

This week Mark R (20th) managed to bag the scalp of Zorro, as Mike M (27th) made his first start of the season. James B (38th) led in Nick (43rd), who is struggling at the moment, and James D (71st). Sam J (106th) went well, getting much closer to Will (102nd) than in the previous race. John D (129th) completed the scoring eight.

Next we had a great scrap; Jon M (158th), Steve W (159th), Dale (160th) and Ferrante (165th) were only separated by a handful of seconds. This battling quartet were followed by Chris (191st), Drew (197th), Tom (207th) and form man Hitesh (209th). Dave L (231st) led home Craig N (246th), in only his second League race, and Dan Ban (252nd). Ben (288th) turned the tables over Lee (293rd) with a much improved performance, before Dave S (340th) showed that the wisdom of age is no handicap.