

## Roadhogg News

### Squeaky Bum Time

We're very much getting to the business end of the LRRL season. With 3 races to go, the standings are as follows:

Vet Women 5/8 (Div 1), 9/10 (B Div 1)

Women 5/8 (Div 2), 5/18 (B Div 2)

Vet Men 2/12 (Div 3), 9/10 (B Div 1)

Men 2/12 (Div 3), 6/10 (B Div 1)

Mixed 7/8 (Div 1)

Our struggles in the B team competition reflect the lower numbers that have been racing this year. In the main leagues, both men's teams have a good chance of promotion, our women have a healthy buffer and our vet women just need to maintain their current level. The mixed league looks like a scrap between us and Hinckley (1 point ahead) to avoid the final relegation place.

### Parkrun Highlights

Lee F has been the only one hitting a milestone (50) since the last round up but there has been plenty of other action. Speed merchants Nathan, Matt and Ian have been swapping fast times and 'The Gurninator' has cracked the 18-minute barrier, bagging the coveted P1 token at Leicester Victoria in the process. James T is another one to have headed the field with P1 at Clifton, having previously picked up a pair of runner up spots.

STOP PRESS: Gurmit gets another P1 and James T sets a new PB.



May, June, July 2018



Fell Running, page 5

**Captain's Report, page 2**

### SHORTS

A warm welcome to Andy and Charly, our newest recruits.

Club Social: 18th August

Picture credits: Mike McSharry, Helen York, Frank Golden.

## Captain's Report

As we are already over half way through the year I thought it was a good time to have a men's captain's report. Since volunteering to be captain I have tried to take a keener interest in what everyone is doing. This is not an easy task. Many runners are out each week doing various park runs, competing in events and attending our training sessions. It is clear that there is a lot of enthusiasm within the club.

This enthusiasm has been evident in the running league races this year. This started with solid performances in the winter league races and has carried on into the summer league races. It is great to see Gurmit improving throughout the year and he has produced some fast times. Gurmit has beaten our usual first runner Mark in recent races. This friendly rivalry will help both runners. As the summer league has continued, we have seen regular consistent performances from Dave, Marc, Terry, Harry and others. Having a strong top eight has helped us maintain healthy positions in the league. Currently we our Men's A is 2nd in Division 3 and the Vets A is 2nd in Division 3. Promotion can be achieved in both. It looks like we need to maintain our performances over the last three races and stay ahead of runners from Racehub!

This year we have welcomed several new members and it has been great to see some of them race. Just to mention a few, there was a sub 40 six mile run from Nathan Brooker at Swithland and a good run by Tom Allen in his debut at Preswold, which included a sprint finish I witnessed, as he shot past me.

In other runs we had Sam Crouchman, Igor Burbela and Sam Jolly all ran just over 1hr 30 for the Hose Half Marathon. Sam Crouchman was improving in every race earlier in the year but unfortunately is currently injured. We look forward to his comeback.

Max, Richard, myself and Lee Hubbard made up our team in the Livingston relay. We also had a lot of runners in the Leicester 10k which was on the same day. For those who have never done the Livingston relay, each runner does a three mile lap around Braunstone Park. It seems to be getting bigger each year and there is a great atmosphere at the changeover point, where all the teams cheer on their runners and runners of other clubs. Hopefully we can get a few more teams in next year's event.



**Tom Martin: Men's Road  
Running Captain**

More recently we had nine men in the Rothley 10k which included a welcome return to racing by Ben Milson (and a decent time too).

Since becoming running captain I have mainly communicated through our Facebook page but I am aware that the ladies currently use a WhatsApp group. If anyone thinks that they would like to see something similar for the men's side then let me know and I will look into it. Also, if you have any ideas or comments then please let me know; I should be around most Wednesdays or league race days.

Keep enjoying your running. Good luck in any races you may be doing in the remainder of the year and good luck to our teams in the Equinox.

## **Brian's Bit**

### **Milton Keynes Marathon Monday 7th. May 2018**

With the temperature rising to 27.0 C or 80.60 F in the shade, this was one of the hardest marathons I have run. Although the route took in some shady paths much of it was in the open, so the temperature experienced by runners was considerably greater than even London was a fortnight before.

The route has a great many twists and turns and undulations, including the infamous redways diving into the underpasses, of which there are many, but no hills as such. Aside from the famous concrete cows there are no sights to cheer competitors. However, the route took in Willen Lake, a park much like the water park at Market Bosworth, and on a hot Bank Holiday it was packed so that we had to weave our way through the unhelpful crowds. Given that the race always takes place on the early-May Bank Holiday you would have thought that by now the organisers would have recognised the need for a dedicated path for runners.

The marshals were, without exception, friendly and constantly encouraging, no mean feat after being stuck out in the blazing sun for six or seven hours. The locals too were out in force, with hose pipes, jelly babies, and buckets of cold water to dip your hat into. But when it was as hot as it was keeping hydrated was the order of the day. There were water stations every three miles, with open bottles or ones with sports tops to choose from, and even for me at the back of the field there was plenty of water to be had at every point,



**Brian Feldman**

with enthusiastic volunteers urging us to keep drinking. I carried a Hydrapak reservoir, with 1½ litres, which I refilled at mile 15, I took a bottle at every water station so by the end I had consumed 4½ litres of water and still my throat was dry at the finish.

My training had been OK, but mainly in the freezing temperatures we have been experiencing, even so, in prospect I thought that I might make a sub 5-hour time, but in the days before the race the forecast temperature was rising steadily, and since I usually fall apart in the heat I had to readjust my strategy for the race. I had been experimenting with the Jeff Galloway method of run-walk-run, or “Jeffing” as it is commonly known so decided on a 90 second run and 30 seconds walk approach. This strategy carried me through the race, and although I was very slow, due in part to a foot problem, having those short-term goals every couple of minutes meant that I was not concentrating on the drag to the next mile.

On the negative side the finish is at pitch-side in the MK stadium, which seems OK until you find that to get out you have to climb a long flight of steps to reach your baggage and escape out. I was also displeased to find that the official car park, for which I had to pay £6 was 2 miles from the start. That was bad enough to begin with but totally unwelcome at the end of a marathon, nor were there any signs to show the way back, and Milton Keynes is not a pedestrian-friendly town in terms of signage.

The first male was Denys Olefir in 2:37:40, first female Colleen Mukuya in 2:57:40, neither time being far behind previous winners, despite the heat. However, Richard Curtis finished in 4:43:23, in his hottest and second slowest marathon. I had my slowest time in the hottest marathon I have ever run, 6:17:54.

## Melton (Road to Recovery) HM

The Melton Mowbray Half is one of three race run on the same day, with a 5k, and a 10k race as well as a fun run for children. Gurmit ran a fine 10k coming second, whilst his children came 1st. & 3rd. in the Fun Run to complete a family clean sweep. The Half is a very low key race with only 113 runners ( two dropped out and one was disqualified for unstated reasons) so that after the 3 mile point, the halfway turn for the 10k, where you can decide to shorten your run, it becomes quite a lonely trek through beautiful countryside. On a warm sunny day it felt more like a long training run than a race, with no one for company or to chase. First man was Jason Barton 1:19:22 and first woman Natalie Teece 1:28:58. Brian Feldman 100th. 2:34:13.

## Race to the King

If you're tired of short sprint events like the marathon, why not try ultras such as the Race to the King, which is a well-organised race from Slindon, a village near Arundel in West Sussex, to Winchester Cathe-

dral, 53 miles along the South Downs Way. The start in a farm field gave a view down towards the sea at Littlehampton and for much of the early route there was a view south to the sea and Bognor Regis, Chichester and other coastal towns, whilst further along the Weald of Kent and Sussex opens out to view. The day was warm but not hot and it was comfortable to run. I had determined a strategy of “Jeffing” 90 seconds run, 30 seconds walk and managed to stick to the schedule for much of the time. For those who don’t know the South Downs Way it is a hilly, undulating, route with long steep hills and vertiginous downfalls. There are Pit Stops every 7 miles or so. These are very well stocked with all sorts of food, and drinks, and the volunteers very helpful and encouraging.

I had originally thought that I might be able to maintain a pace of 4 1/2 miles an hour, but the terrain quickly rendered that idea as absurdly optimistic. However, I was still at 4 mph at 21 miles. My support team for this run was my daughter Charly, ably assisted by her daughter Sadie, 5 months and seeing their smiling faces at each stop was lovely and reassuring. At 30 miles, Queen Elizabeth Park, I was still managing 3 1/2 mph comfortably. As often happens on ultra runs, I had been accompanied by one or other runner for some distance and the companionship helps to unravel the miles. At the 35 mile pit stop my companion of the time decided to rest for longer and I continued alone at a good pace but soon an old trouble surfaced: my right hip started to cause problems and soon I was unable to run properly and by 40 miles Charly called a halt. Naturally, I was very disappointed to have failed to complete a long run, but I knew that even though there were only 13 miles to go I could only have gone the distance on my hands and knees.

Despite having to stop early I had enjoyed the run and am determined to complete it, perhaps next year, or the year after, running with my daughter. There are lots of ultra races around, try them and enjoy the freedom and relaxation of a trail run without the time pressure of a road marathon.

## **On the Fell**

### **Castleton (6.3 miles/1503ft)**

There’s something special about a Friday fell race. Yes, it means braving the M1 congestion, but it does set the weekend up nicely. The Castleton race is part of the Gritstone Series; a set of races in the northern part of the Derbyshire Peak District. After a typically tiresome drive, I did wonder whether I was going to find the race at all, when the satnav made its third attempt to direct me down gravel tracks. Fortunately, I soon stumbled on a bunch of marshals (the advantage of most races being based in small villages) and received directions to the car park. Race HQ was in a tatty rugby clubhouse about a kilometre from the

village and the formalities (traditional fell running; £5, entries on the day only) were quickly completed. I had a warm up and then spent some time chatting to a group of half a dozen Stilton Striders (some of whom are fell regulars) who were making a weekend of it and doing the Edale race on the Sunday too.

There were so many runners that the race started late. The start seemed a bit random, no gun or whistle, as the mass of runners ran the length of a rugby field, did a tight turn round the goalposts and then headed back towards a gate by the clubhouse. Once through the car park we were on to a country lane, gradually sloping up towards the base of the hill. After half a mile we were onto a rocky path that had eroded to become a narrow shoulder-high gully. Frustratingly, the line slowed to a walk and there was nothing that could be done. By the time the bottle-neck was released, the gradient put a stop to any grand thoughts of making up for lost time. After a short while, the climbing eased off and there was a long section of contouring under Back Tor and on towards Lose Hill. The path up Lose Hill (476m) basically goes straight up. Much of it is flagged, so it's not great to run, even if you have the legs, and most people resorted to the 'fell runner's walk' (hands on knees) until the gradient slackened off at the top.

From Lose Hill it is basically a ridge run over Back Tor and Hollins Cross (378m) to Mam Tor (498m). The ground is very tricky; sections with steps of flags (put in to combat erosion) or lots of large, loose stones. Runners who had done the race before managed to find some quite creative lines which yielded a better surface. The view from the ridge is magnificent, with the Hope valley to the left and the Vale of Edale to the right, but to be honest, if you want to stay upright there's precious little opportunity to admire it. Picking lines and foot plants requires complete concentration. As I reached Hollins Cross I met the leader on his way down from Mam Tor and over the 0.8 mile climb up the Tor, a trickle of descending runners became a torrent; Ferraris to our mobility scooters as they harnessed gravity and we fought against it. Eventually, we in turn, treated the trig point as a roundabout and sling-shotted down the hill.



As we made the turn I spotted a guy from Shelton who I'd had a good battle with at Shining Tor. I'd lost sight of him in the first narrow section and feared he'd got too far ahead to be caught. Game on! First there

was a runner from Dark Peak to contend with and he proved to be a skilled descender, particularly on the most technical bits. Picking the best line can be crucial and like a game of snakes and ladders, fortunes change rapidly. I quickly realised that my best bet was to limit my losses on the rocky stuff and make sure I stayed in the game until we reached tarmac. Once we hit the road, those Tuesday sessions came to the fore and I was able to pick off both of my targets before the final sprint across the rugby ground to the finish. (121/286)

## Calton Crawl (4.5 miles/801ft)

No website, no Facebook page; this race makes no concessions to the modern age. When you reach the village there's not a great deal to convince you that a race is imminent but I suppose that's part of the old-school charm. Parking in a rough field, a village hall with ladies taking entries and busying themselves with tea, cakes and sandwiches, plus a barrel of ale ready to restore weary runners.



Although I was tired and far from sure what I had in my legs, I tried to run a decent pace on the first lap of the field so I'd not get held up in the narrow section that I knew followed. A modest field of just 99 probably helped too, but I was rewarded by being able to set my own pace as a narrow path took us up the first hill. After passing a restored farmhouse we crossed a meadow, hurdling the lines of hay left to dry in the sun. A working farmyard was followed by a climb through rough pasture, trying to keep ankles intact on ground made uneven by cattle hooves and strewn with rock. The softening up process was completed with a short steep descent and then we were confronted by the main challenge of the day; Throwley Moor. I managed to get through the gate at the foot of the climb without the leader being anywhere in sight, which was progress over my previous visit. After 50m the climb becomes so steep that no one runs and the line of people, hands on knees, stretches up in front of me. As we reach the final stages the climb steepens so much that the name of the race proves to be no mere piece of marketing hyperbole.

Hard won elevation is lost in less than a minute of desperately trying to move one's legs fast enough to avoid complete loss of control and then there's a long gradual climb; the sort you'd barely notice on fresh legs, but which suddenly feels far harder than it should. Once we reach the top, thoughts start to turn to

finishing position. At first, having convinced myself that there was a small climb still to come, I held back a little but once I spotted my mistake it was time to commit fully. I managed to overhaul a couple of guys before the path narrowed and ended up with a clear run down the steepest bit. Emerging into the finish field, I easily overhauled a guy and then set about running down a Dark Peak runner, who I later learnt was the ladies winner, just before the line. (24/97)

## Great Hucklow (6.1 miles/1115ft)

Another real community event but this time with media savvy; a series of Facebook posts had carefully built up expectation as the volunteers readied the course for the runners. Much of the course is on private land and a section of it, inaccessible for the rest of the year, is specially cut and strimmed in the days before the race. We'd had a long period of dry weather and race day was hot, leading to the almost unprecedented decision to include a water station at halfway. Whether it was the heat or the fact that there had been a race every night of the week, the entry was smaller than usual. After registering and warming up in the bright sun, tempered only by a stiff breeze, I sat in the shade while we waited for the off.

After nearly a mile downhill (not my favourite way to start a race) on ground so dry that the runners feet raise clouds of dust, we encounter a big puddle in a gateway (a hidden spring, perhaps?). The climb up to Abney Moor is challenging enough but a slight change to the route adds to the challenge by making the assault more direct. After the trig point we are onto a long section of tussocky grass where you follow the imprint of the runners in front (whilst trying to avoid a pratfall). A short section of tarmac provides some relief, and the chance to overtake, before we plunge into the depths of Bretton Clough. At first, there isn't a proper path and even after that it is too narrow and twisty to pass. Peat bog lurks in the Clough; protected from the sun and no doubt fed by springs. Most of us sunk up to our knees but one unfortunate lady finished looking like she'd been mud wrestling.

As we worked our way up the Clough I could hear very heavy footfalls behind me. There was no room to move aside, so I just ploughed on and when we reached a wider bit I managed to put a few bodies between myself and the owner of those heavy feet (looking round on ground so tricky is impossible, so I never did find out whose they were). After a relatively poor first half, I was beginning to make progress through the field. A route change to avoid cows with calves added a bit more tarmac, and a chance to regroup, before we plunged through the woods to the finish and the fabled flapjack. (40/113)