SAPIENTIA

STONE MASTER MARATHONERS

Sapientia atque Levitas

February/March 1999

CONTENTS

Editor: Gerry Barnard
11, Trinity Road
Eccleshall
Staffs., ST21 6AR

(01785) 851483

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

What a good way to start a new year; knowing that there's enough news to impart and contributions from members to put together this mag. I can now go on holiday!

Last time we brought you news of the proposal for a Millennium Run for SMM and now we are able to tell you all to start preparing for your part in it as there has been nothing but positive feedback from the members who have completed the return or by the show of hands at our last clubnight. Should be a spectacular day.

Another innovative idea when we ran the Coast to Coast relay last year proved to be so popular that a similar event is being organised for the public holiday over the first weekend in May. This year we shall be in Wales and Phil's article giving preliminary details can be found in this issue.

The 1998 Club Championship table has now been finalised and hopefully I have not missed anybody out from the races involved. Please tell me if I have as gremlins still abound - even in the computer age! In 1999 the Championship will be run under a different format which the committee hopes will appeal to the members. The NSRRA race ladder should prove interesting and if I'm to be involved in publishing results I shall certainly be relying on JC for the workings, our JC that is!

Had a very nice letter from Alan Braddock accompanying his Karrimor article in which he sends best wishes to you all. Alan has also arrived in the techno age as he lists a fax number (01924 280321) and an E Mail address which is *alan.braddock@which.net.* Guess the next SMM directory revision will include this sort of info and will eventually be issued in diskette form(?). I am always hopeful of encouraging other out-of-town members to tell us something of their life away from Stone, even if competing no more. I'm sure that the Stone regulars would be interested to know how life is treating you now. Any takers?

1998 provided another enjoyable year of club life culminating in the Christmas dinner at Swynnerton ably organised by Phil and his Social Committee, the Bare Wrist Run club night and the post Christmas away day at our place. Due to our holiday Patsy and I will miss the NSRRA Presentation Evening this time but are due to be back (just!) in time for our own. Have a very good 1999 one and all.

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Happy New Year to you all. I for one was not sorry to see the end of 1998, it did not rate very highly. 1999 has got to be better and Angela would like to see all 365 days of it, not miss out on about a quarter of it like last year!!

Well we managed good weather for the "Bare Wrist Run" but there were only 29 runners: the year before when it poured down there were 40, perhaps they hadn't all dried out!! Thought I might have to disqualify Rose and Lorna for being paced over the latter part of the course but as it was Christmas I let them off!!

The results were way out compared to other years, taking the first three there has only been one result in double figures in the last four years - and that was 12 seconds (men's times). In the ladies section twenty seconds was the worst. It makes me think that last year's two equal zero seconds did have a satellite link after all!

Have you sent your 1998 results in for consideration? Don't be modest; you never know - and it does help the committee to see the overall picture when they come to make their selections for awards. Talking of awards, we have the road runners do on the 22nd of January. Well done to those of you who feature. Then we have our own "do" on the 6th of February (menu looks great).

Between the two there is the University 10k on 31st of January - so get geared up for that and we hope to see you all "at it"

Much Sapientia

Dave Mason

Patsy's Piece

Hi Folks

I hope that you all had a good Christmas with your loved ones and friends. We enjoyed ourselves with Gerry's daughter, Linda and partner, with us from Christmas afternoon until Boxing morning. The weather on Boxing Day afternoon put paid to our proposed walk but we were unexpectedly invited out to tea by friends which was really nice. Then on Bank Holiday Monday we were delighted to welcome some of our members back here for refreshments after the run. Our local bobby, Geoff Banwell, joined the fun as a guest and afterwards pronounced our club friends "a nice bunch"!

I am sure others will also write about the Majorca trip so I apologise for any repetition. It was an excellent week. Good hotel, great company and pretty good weather. It was particularly nice for Gerry and me to meet up with a few from Stafford Harriers and to see how well all our party jelled and became one friendly group. The marathon day was exciting, both the races and the evening presentation; the latter particularly so with Rose first over 50 lady in the half and George second over 60 gent in the marathon.

Not having ridden a bicycle for 20 years or more, and never on a mountain bike, I was persuaded to go on the short (?) bike ride along some of the marathon course. What seemed a great number of hills and some 13 miles or so later I made it back to the bike hire shop. Actually I enjoyed it immensely and was quite pleased with myself as I only had two very short walks; and managed to keep up fairly well, all without falling off!! The next day - "You'll be all right today Patsy, we're just going for a short walk." They said eventually it must have been about 8 miles, I think! The last leg and a "Private" notice blocked our way on the public footpath. Undaunted, we climbed the fence and proceeded - only to find a more difficult fence that we had to get over. I'm sure the owners of the supermarket trolley that we use to get a leg up will be wondering how it came to be in the sheep field!

Gerry and I were also able to take part in that other favourite pastime of ours, dancing. There were tea dances and/or evening sessions at the hotel. Most was what is called 'Sequence Dancing' which we don't do but at the first mention of a quickstep or foxtrot we were out of our chairs and onto the floor. What we hadn't realised was that the organisers always did the first twirl round the floor - so we had not only gatecrashed but done it in casual clothes and wearing TRAINERS! Sour looks, but they got used to us in the end. A couple of the younger Harriers were surprised at our dancing among "those old people" —— we didn't let on! It is to be hoped that we will be able to join a similar marathon event next year.

Il hope you all had splendid New Year celebrations. Along with some others we kicked up our heels at Pam and Mac's, and a great fun evening it was. May you and yours all have a healthy and happy 1999 with lots of good running and many p.b's. As Gerry has apparently volunteered me to do 10 miles in George's Millenium Run I shall have to attempt the odd mile or two training!!! God bless.

Patsy

1999 Stone Master Marathoners Club Championship

For the 1999 Club Championship the Management Committee has agreed to a trial change in format with the following objectives in mind:

(1) To encourage in-depth competition.
(2) To maximise head-to-head competition.
(3) To encourage participation in NSRRA races (we need the points).

There will be separate Club Championships for Men and Ladies. The Championships will comprise three races of which two will count with no referral to the third race. In the event of a points draw average time per mile over the best two runs will decide the winner. The NSRRA points sytem will be used i.e. 50 points to winner, 45 to second, 41 to third, etc.

The three races for 1999 are:

Stafford Half-Marathon
Trentham Trailblazer (counting as a ten mile race)
Milton 10k

Additionally, there will be a mixed Mens/Ladies season-long ladder based on any 8 events from the NSRRA races, times to be age related adjusted, with a trophy going to the member who has improved their position the most during the year. The 1998 Club Championship table will utilised as the basis for the 1999 competition.

The Marathon competition will be retained as a stand-alone event with the quickest time in a recognised event deciding the winners of the Mens' and Ladies' Championships.

To qualify for Club Championships, members - first and second claim - must enter as "SMM" and run in club kit.

Karry On Up The Howgills

Karrimor Mountain Marathon 1998

3.00 p.m. and cool sunshine in Kirkby Steven, Friday, October 23rd, like a cattle town from a John Wayne movie. The only difference is that the cattle are replaced by motors and drovers swear in English and not American. People taking their kids home from school, leaping fool-hardily around the road as if it was Pamplona when they run the bulls. I haul up dustily beside a kerb in some locals favourite parking spot and look around for Big John and Big Johns Motor. He soon heaves into view, the tattered remnants of other motorists dangling from the bumpers of the Giant Suzuki Indomitable that only he can wield. "Hi," I say. "Follow me up the road". Deposit insignificant Braddock-mobile at roadside, unload gear and board the Lasswade Panzerkraftwagen. Eventually discover Registration and campsite after serious error of navigation (mine) we stroll in and raise the Littlewood standard within the stockade. Outside, a primitive ploughing competition is afoot as lesser mortals struggle across the moor to station their vehicles in the car-park (or "swamp" as they call them hereabouts). A simple meal of Cassoulet accompanied by a bottle of 1997 Kalterersee Classico suffices to prepare us for the morrow and we turn in to sleep beneath the brightly shining stars and the crescent new moon.

Morning. Saturday. Hells Teeth what a contrast. Driving rain and a real howling gale as we stumbled down the field to the Long Score start. The hardest bit is finding somewhere to mark the map without getting it dragged from our hands by the wind. Then it's heads down with full hard weather gear on across the moor into the teeth of it to the first check. The Howgill Fells are trackless and the only diversions are up and down - up the soggy bog and down into the waterlogged ditch. We nevertheless progress, wading the becks of Langdale (ignoring the bridge), Chumdale and Uldale. Do these places really still exist or have they been swept into oblivion by the torrents that fell that day? We have 70 points after two checks and crossing below Uldale Head I am swept off balance by the gale and fall, losing my copy of the map to the elements. Luckily JL has a firm grasp of his - map that is - but he is suffering from doubt and despondency as we ascend Ulgill Rigg to Breaks Head on Busk Howe. His trousers are being removed by the

forces of nature! What! Giveup!? After we've paid to come in ! Not likely ! So he is forced to walk into the wind downhill for the rest of the journey. This makes little difference to progress as it is necessary to tack like a sailing ship in order to make any headway at all.

We fall therefore into the top of Long Rigg Beck and then struggle upwards over White Fell Head towards The Calf and Cautley Crag. The wind is so strong that at times I can only shift by literal climbing technique over the grass, time and again I get blown over and off balance. I can't see John because when I raise my head to look where he is going the wind knocks me down again. At times like this one feels a little silly to be doing such things at the age when all sensible pensioners should be spending Saturday shopping and looking forward to the football on the telly. In the warm. And DRY. . . Red Gill pours splendidly over Cautley Spout and is a foaming torrent in the easy bits that is. In the difficult places it is ten feet wide, over a yard deep and capable of drowning. I struggle again but manage two successive bad weather longjump records for 66-year-old cripples. A couple of the chaps survive wading waist deep in the wet only to find that they have to come back over again. Beside Cautley Spout the downhill track is greasy and dangerous. To reach one more check we have to cross the stream again and during this episode JL, knight in shining armour, is swept under water whilst assisting a damsel in distress. These young lads are so impetuous.

Campsite. 180 points and over an hour early. We erect the tent, eventually, on a sloping hillside and commence to brew up. "Er, Alan, I don't know how to put this, but I can't find the stove. ." Oh Dear! Well I force the lad out into the storm on the scrounge and he returns bearing cooking equipment, having fallen raving and ravenous upon two more maidens. We now have a stove for a while at least, food is heated. Then I discover that I have put my rucksac on top of the missing item whilst crawling into the tent. Oh well, everybody needs a bit of fun now and then.

The tent is somewhat sordid in places, wet under my bug-bag but fortunately its a Buffalo so it is still warm if a bit soggy. Neither of us dare go outside in case the tent isn't here when we get back, assuming we can find the place again. During the evening there is just one uniquely colossal thunderclap which

seems as if lightning has just missed us. Eardrums still rattling from the noise I am struck on the face by the cross-point of the tent poles as the side is blown flat and, fortunately, rebounds without breaking. Some folk aren't so lucky; there has been a 43% dropout by this halfway point.

Eventually there is morning. Miraculously the rain has stopped and there is even a view. Gobs have never been so struck. Around us a scene of desperate haste, tents being wrung out and flung into sacks, sleeping bags ditto. The annual freak show carnival, of the Brits peeing into the place where the urinal screens used to be, is in full career and mud is deep. Oh well, back to the grind; John hoists me once more onto his mighty shoulders and totters off. It's good to have a friend. This day is more like it; there is still a lot of water about but drowning is less likely - at least on top of the hills. Now the only problem is sore. Sore feet, knees, hands, eyes mainly but am almost dry in places. We pick up more points due to Johns impeccable navigation, over Kensgriff and Yarlside, Hazelgill Knott and so on. I'm tired and The Man wants to know why I'm not running. Well we do have an hour to spare at least and there's nowt to be gained. The End.

Er, not quite the end. On returning to base find the tent, Johns 100-year-old Vango Impregnable, seriously destroyed by the blast. "It was flapping like an enormous windsock until we laid it down...." says the good Samaritan who nailed it to the bog. Surprisingly, nothing of importance has gone missing. The Giant Gas-Guzzling Suzuki makes short work of getting out of the bog, casually brushing aside lesser vehicles as it does. We are 119th out of 232 finishers and the oldest team in the Long Score - 31st on handicap. In the whole event 1681 teams started , 734 didn't finish. (No signs for example of Mac McCoig and his mate.) Meet Alan Swithenbank and Ian Gamble, (mountaineering club friends) who did finish but had decided to handicap themselves on day 1 by throwing away their reading specs, so had an interesting time map-reading with the magnifying glass in the compass. The things these young lads do for fun! !

Good Luck to the SMM and all who sail her.

Alan My-feet-are-better-now-but-will-I-ever-run-again Braddock.

Sun, Sea and whatever.....

As 'first-timers' on the Stafford Harriers annual trip to Majorca we were not sure what to expect - but it turned out to be a really good do with plenty of laughs, some sunshine and even the odd spot of grog. Here's how we saw it.....

Swapping a week of winter weather in England for a week in a warmer clime always looked like a good idea and thus we found ourselves at Manchester Airport early in December where we met up with the rest of the party of runners and partners from SMM and Stafford Harriers for a late evening flight into the unknown.

The trip was primarily to take in the Calvia Marathon and Half-Marathon but due to injuries/sickness/other reasons/excuses, more were there purely to enjoy the social scene this time than would actually be running, and I was in the first catagory. Still, we would be out there supporting.

Race day saw the start of better weather after a spell of rain and cold winds on the island. For the combined start at 9.30 am it was still cool but from then on it became sunnier and warmer. Very pleasant for those spectating but the runners would need to take on plenty of water. Those taking part said afterwards how well organised the race was, and that was also true at the race finish area. A young lady kept up a commentary almost continiously, mainly in Spanish but going to English or German from time to time while also dancing and moving to the up-tempo music on the PA system. We were kept informed of the race progress and in no time at all, it seemed, the first runner in the Half was only a mile or so away. The finish straight was more than half a mile long and soon Spanish international A. Pena came into view and dashed to the line smiling, waving and making it look as if he was on a training run. As he finished six minutes plus ahead of the next finisher in 1.3.38 he's obviously some athlete. As the runners streamed in we were naturally looking for the SMM vests and there was the first, Dave Gillick, home in 1.30.04. A slow time for Dave but he was a hero even to start as he'd arrived was a cold and did um and arr whether to run or not. Rose finished in 1.47.17 and won the F50 class - something that she knew immediately as a computer result slip was handed to each finisher on the line showing their result including average time per mile and position in class. Quite remarkable.

From the finish area we were unable to see the marathon runners start their second lap and so could not follow their progress at the half way point. The outcome would be all the more interesting because there was a sweepstake to predict the finishing position of the seven from SMM and SH on the go. Sue and Rob decided en-route that a Half would be enough for them today and so we were now down to five to look out for. Trying to predict on previous form had not been much help either. Craig Anderton had been working abroad for quite long spells and had not been able to prepare properly - would his training pace run be quicker than Vernon who has had a

very good year and hoped to dip under three hours? And what about George Kay? Racing to mark twenty five years since his first marathon, but on very little training due to injury. Massive willpower - but would that be enough? Things were getting tense on the finish line.

The race was won in 2.18 with the first lady crossing the line in 2.39, almost half an hour ahead of her nearest rival, but it was still some time to wait before we could expect to see that first red or yellow vest. It was Vernon, but when he first came into view we doubted that he could get to the line in time to meet his target. In fact he had gauged it just right and was running strongly right to the end - home with 11 seconds to spare! No problem! The end of a really good season for him. Nine minutes later Craig arrived and then Lew, a further 3 minutes down, but another strong run to round off a year not without its problems. Mike Jones ran 3.15 and then it was the wait for George. A new experience for George at this end of his running days but amazingly under the circumstances he had been 8 minute miling almost all the way and finished in 3.32. A very gutsy run.

The prize giving in the early evening was another very good occasion, although as it was conducted in Spanish we understood little of what was being said. Naturally we cheered when a Brit was called to collect an award, all the more loudly when Rose and George were presented with their trophies as 1st F50 and 2nd V60 and then as the champagne flowed, we also cheered for the Germans. We shouldn't encourage them really!

That saw off the Sunday and then it was down to seriously enjoying ourselves. Somebody had been doing a bit of market research and had found where the best value coffee and cognac was available, so that place became the unofficial HQ when we were out of the hotel. The promenade walk through Magaluff and Palma Nova was pleasant and not too crowded at this time of the year. For most of our stay the weather was sunny so walking along the front was popular. Mountain bikes were available for hire, providing an easy means for exploring some of the island. Dave Gillick organised an outing for the SMM Wheelers where Rose and he were joined by Lew and Leslie and Patsy and myself. I think that we may have had a map but by keeping to the blue line marking the marathon route it was superflous to our needs. Leslie and Patsy had been apprehensive about this cycling lark, and I know in Patsy's case this was because she had not been on a bike for about twenty years. However, all fears proved groundless. The bikes had been well maintained and had enough gears to deal with the steepest incline. We stopped frequently to look at this or that, and even for a very welcome pint in Santa Pensa.

Another day we went walking - following routes suggested by the marathon organisers in a booklet handed to race entrants. The booklet was available in Spanish and English - a fact only known to George at the end of a week during which he had been struggling to make sense of the lingo. Yes, he had been handed the wrong version and was not aware that it was also available in

English!

Mick and Carol Jones have organising these trips to a stage where it all happens without fuss or bother - a real seamless job in the modern vernacular and a great credit to them. The only organised social evening is for a competition - in this case the word and number game "Countdown" as seen on channel 4 at home. Teams were picked by some means or other and naturally the whole thing took place in a small but very friendly hostelry across the road from the hotel. Although events tended to get a bit confused at times it all ended with the right result as our team won! Lew coming on particularly strongly towards the end after we had been tied with Dave's lot for most of the evening. Other evenings were spent in various watering holes including an Irish pub where 'Mick the Fiddler' was the star attraction. He was worth hearing but the price of a pint of Guiness there was loaded to compensate. His timekeeping also left a bit to be desired, should have said 'Irish time' on the ad.

So there we have it really. Good organisation, weather, socialising with an occasional drink thrown in and even a bit of dancing for the memsahib and myself. The hotel was pretty good all round, apart from the lifts so walking the nine floors to our rooms was a pretty regular involuntary additional training session. Ah, reminds me - yes, we even went for the occasional run but perhaps not so much as we would have done had off-road trails been more readily available. Patsy and I even managed to escape from a con involving a promised 'free' trip to Palma..... but that's for another time - maybe!

Mind you, not everthing can be good. I forget now who first succumbed but there was a bug going round, a basically twenty four hour sickness that strangely selected people in turn and so it seemed that someone was missing out on the fun each day. Even Dave's attempt to make himself immune with large doses of alcohol didn't work and he unluckily caught it prior to setting off for the airport and home. Patsy and I were lucky ones, reckoning that the holiday had ended before it was our turn. Still, our time was not without a small problem.

I had omitted to pick up the housekeys that I'd been asked to deposit in a box when we passed through security at Manchester! What a charlie. Still, couldn't do anything about it until back at Manchester - but that would be at about 4.00 am!
Sure enough, I was able to confirm that they had them in their Lost Property department but there would be nobody to hand them over until six at the earliest..We pressed on to Eccleshall, hoping that our neighbour holding the spare key had put it in the porch as we had requested in a letter from Majorca. Having bid Pauline and George farewell we then looked for the key. Not there! It would be the garage then, to sit in the car until such time that we could reasonably knock them up. At that point Patsy found another key on her keyring that we hadn't noticed. It proved to be one we'd had cut for the back door but didn't use because it needed fiddling with to make it work. Saved! And it transpired that our neighbours were away - and the letter travelling by TNT was delivered yesterday; 17 days after posting..... Some are just born lucky!

Lôn Las Cymru - North

May 1st - 3rd 1999

Following on from the success of last years Coast to Coast run, we are planning this year to try another Sustran route - Lôn Las Cymru - the Welsh National Cycle Coast Welsh style. The route is about 243 miles and runs from Cardiff to Holyhead and we are going to attempt the northern part of the route from Builth Wells to Holyhead about 170 miles "ish". The northern half of Lôn Las Cymru follows quiet minor roads,

The route as described by the book is as follows:-

- Builth Wells to Llanidloes (31 miles)

The route will start in Builth Wells and follow quiet undulating minor roads alongside the River Wye to Llanidoes.

- Llanidloes to Aberllefenni and Devil's Bridge to Dyffryn Dysynni (31 miles)

A gentle run or ride following the River Severn through the Hafren Forest over the mountain road towards Machynlleth and north to Corris.

- Aberllefenni and Dyffryn Dysynni to Penmorfa (45miles)

The route then follows the Morfa Mawddach trail from Dolgellau around the coast to Barmouth, traversing the hilly lanes above Harlich to Porthmadog.

- Penmorfa to Menai Strait (36miles)

Quiet minor roads and the railway paths of LÛn Eifion and LÛn Las Menai connecting Criccieth to the Menai Strait.

- Menai Strait to Holyhead (32 miles)

Through peaceful lanes across Anglesey to Holy Island and Holyhead.

There are a number of off-road alternative routes that can be taken along the route but these will require some thought and planning as they are described as "a tough ride across remote country and should only be attempted by experienced mountain bikes" rather rough sections, but as they say you can't beat a bit

of rough and when you have taken on the challenge of Penrith you can do anything !

The route is about 170 miles "ish" and varies in height from sea level to the about 600 metres. The format of the run will be similar to the Coast to Coast, we will be using a mini bus (that's if we are able to hire one - another story) and a car. We plan this year to make better use of the bikes as support to the runners, so we are looking for both runners and keen cyclists. As the run is over three days we will be using suitable B&Bs for the overnight stops and dinning in local eating houses - if they are open ? During the run food will be supplied by are very able catering section (if anyone volunteers). The cost will be about £90, the same as last, and covers everything - unless we can find a sponsor!

This will be a challenging route and for those who are interested maps are available from Phil.

If you are interested please contact Phil, Brian Hall or John Clemens.

.....AND DON'T FORGET !

Stone Master Marathoners

Annual Presentation Night
and Dinner Dance
Saturday 6th February 1999
Brocton Hall Golf Club
7:00 for 7:30 - carriages at 1:00 am
(Black Tie Optional)

Menus are available at the club.

PHIL

Idle Thoughts of an Idle Jogger by Plodder

For this issue I thought I would suspend the usual idle ramblings and deal instead with some of the fan mail I have accumulated. The first is a complementary letter I received and is totally unsolicited:

Dear Plodder,

Yours is without doubt the most amusing and interesting magazine article I have ever read. Keep it up!

Mum.

PS, Is that OK? Is that how you asked me to put it? Why don't you ring more often? You only seem to ring me when you want something. Why can't you get a proper job like that nice Mr. Saddam?

This is fairly typical of the rest of my mail. However, much of my post is from people asking my advice on various running matters. Clearly they perceive that I have a wealth of experience and my common-sense approach has prompted these requests for assistance. I am only too glad to help those less fortunate than myself. I have, of course, changed the names to avoid any embarrassment.

Uncle Plodder's Problem Page

Dear Uncle Plodder,

I am a fairly successful runner in the club but I posses an obnoxious personality. I don't think there's anyone in the club I haven't upset at one time or another - even you. What can I do?

Alfonse

Dear Alfonse,

Yes, I remember you, you snivelling rat! How dare you write to me and ask for help after what you said to me! Get off my page at once!

Uncle Plodder

(That told him! What a nerve!)

Dear Uncle Plodder,

I am a long-standing club member but my running has fallen into the doldrums over the last few years. I guess age and all those ultra-marathons has finally caught up with me. Any suggestions?

Bilbo

Dear Bilbo,

Don't give me that, you whinger. I know for a fact it isn't age or overtraining that have done you in, it's cigarettes, whisky and wild, wild women. You can't party every night and expect to run sub-3 marathons. My suggestion is that you cut out the day-time job. This will give you a chance to catch up on your sleep.

Uncle Plodder.

Dear Uncle Plodder,

I am training hard but my times aren't improving. I run twice a day most days, covering some 120 miles each week. I run fartlek once a week, 12 x 800 three times a week, 20 x 400 twice a week, 4 x 1 mile at 5:30 pace once a week and a long run of 20 miles once a week. Despite all this, my best marathon times are still only in the 2 hours 10 minutes range. Where am I going wrong?

Carmen

Dear Carmen,

Er, search me, mate. Maybe you should try tucking some marmite or marmalade sandwiches in the top of your shorts.

Uncle Plodder.

Well that's enough of that. We'll have some more letters another time. Meanwhile, keep the fan mail coming in folks! Personally, I feel a long lie down coming on, as recommended in my personal training programme, written by my personal trainer, Danny La Rue. This is called interval training and involves as long an interval between training sessions as possible - two or three weeks preferably.

The Tale of a Virgin Marathon Runner

It was about this time last year that I started to think about running my first marathon. The entry form had gone in, so there could be no turning back. I had never run to a schedule and had no intention of starting; confidence reigned supreme...

On Christmas day before dinner and after having opened the presents I set off with my Dad on a nice twelve mile run, having done fifteen the day before. The seriousness of it all was starting to creep up on me. Nobody had told me but I was starting to realise that twenty six miles was in fact a bloody long way...

Two weeks of running later and I was back at University and training on my own again. My runs were getting longer and I was still confident. My friends all thought that I was crazy for going running in the cold and rain of Lancaster. I was out running at all different times of the day, morning, noon, night and even when hungover from parties. Time was starting to get precious; the Stafford Twenty was looming in the not too distant future.

So one weekend I came home and went to Stafford; it was time to find out just what I could do. Lets get straight, twenty miles is a lot further than the untrained eye would expect; as it turned out - quite a lot further. You see I was only used to running short distances: my races up until then had not exceeded six miles. The reality of having suddenly to think of twenty miles of racing seemed silly; the only competition that day would be to complete twenty miles without stopping. I did, in a quite respectable time and came seventy second which I made me very proud. The thing that I did not really understand was that after all that, with all the blisters that I had on my feet, I was happy and felt strangely satisfied...

Easter came and went and the big day was all of a sudden upon us. Off to London we went. The bus got to the starting area surprisingly late and I was in dire need for a call of nature that had refused to happen at the hotel, and the portaloos were overflowing... Anywhere people are gathering and there are portaloos I will take a bet that there are simply not enough. So for those of you heading for London this year, just hold your nose. I got vaselined up and went to my starting area; Blue start two - it is one of those things that you don't forget, the

name of your starting area.... And we're off...

The odd thing about running London is that there are twenty odd thousand people around you all heading in the same direction. To start with I felt like a stick in a river, letting the current take me along. Once I had got used to people that I didn't know calling my name (it was written on my T-shirt) everything started to return to normal. My feet felt like the inside of a dry frying pan, I felt light headed, and Vernon had just passed me like I was standing still - and I was still only at fifteen miles. At twenty two miles I hit the wall. At twenty six miles, three hundred and sixty five yards I finished. I fell over when I met Mum and Dad, the girls from St John's swarmed around me as the cramp set in and all of a sudden I started to feel better. My brother had come across to watch me finish and gave me what I considered to be a well deserved bottle of champagne.

So that is it, the story of my first marathon. I hope that I have not put anyone off doing it because for all the hurt, fatigue and mental torment, I'll be going back. Next time it's going to be sub three hours - even if it does kill me...

Russ Hall

Tales from old Arabia

Ahem! ....borrowed from Bahrain HHH 450th run mag - July 1981

Move on up.....

At this time of the year runners who race are concious of a new chance looming in the year ahead when they enter a new age group. A glance at the names of the ladies who come within this category tells me that it would not be unreasonable to expect a record or two to be broken in the near future, certainly at club or NSRRA level and maybe even better. Are there club records kept? If so, is there a current club member who has a comprehensive list of the records to hand? Please let me know.

So, who's doing what in 1999?

Starting with the youngest, **Russell Hall** will be 21 on August 18th and thus become a senior while **Jayne Metcalfe** goes to the 30-34 age group on January 13th.

Kym Billington-Baddley moves to the F40's on February 2nd and **Andrew Wilding** joins the vets' ranks for the first time on March 15th.

Looking for a good result or two will be **Peter Moseley** who will be 50 on August 9th and **Celia Hargrave** who reaches that milestone on November 24th while **Mick** and **Elaine Statham** both become 55 in 1999; **Mick** on January 1st and **Elaine** on May 19th.

At the more mature levels we find **Geoff Frost** who will celebrate arriving at the big 60 on April 22nd followed by **Jimmy Grant** on June 13th. Next we are in the realms where many race organisers no longer recognise us as a separate entity i.e. 65 which it will be for me on March 16th, **John Morgan** on June 26th and **Angela Glendenning** on December 12th.

Finally it's our first two members to break through the 70 barrier but they are both staving it off until December. **David Evans** just gets there first on the 16th hotly pursued by **Derek Palmer** on the 23rd.

Make the most of it!!

Gerry

What's On.....Racing

NSRRA: Programme of League Races For 1999

For the benefit of those who have yet to join the North Staffs Road Running Association, the programme for the 1999 season is reproduced below. Runners are grouped in leagues and age groups and points awarded according to where a runner finishes each race in his or her group. Each runner's best 12 results count towards end of season individual awards and all runners points count towards team awards. All this can be yours for just £5 a year which gives you free entry into races number 1, *XI*, 16 and 20. SMM needs YOU to compete in as many events as possible if we are to win the team championships we so narrowly missed in 1998. See George Kay or Mac McCoig for a form to join NSRRA.

01)	Sat 27 Feb	2.30 Bathpool 5 (AB+EVD)
		3.15 (C+XZ+LM)
02)	Sun 07 Mar	11.00 Stafford 20
03)	Sun 21 Mar	10.30 Stafford Half-Marathon
04)	Sun 11 Apl	11.00 Newcastle Seven
05)	Sun 02 May	11.00 Crewe 10k
06)	Sun 09 Apl	11.00 Uttoxeter Half-Marathon
07)	Wed 19 May	19.00 Trentham Trailblazer 15k
08)	Sun 30 May	09.30 South Cheshire (Adtranz) Pre-Potts 20
09)	Sun 06 Jun	11.00 Michelin TT (off-road) Eight
10)	Sun 20 Jun	10.30 Potteries Marathon
X1)	*Wed30 Jun*	*19.00 Stone 10k (Reserve for Races 1-10)*
11)	Sun 18 Jul	10.45 Cheadle Festival Four
12)	Wed 28 Jul	19.15 Carsa Five
13)	Sat 24 Jul	15.00 John Oultram 10
14)	Sun 01 Aug	10.30 Milton 10k
15)	Sun 15 Aug	11.00 Leek Half-Marathon
X2)	*Wed 18 Aug*	*Staffs Knot 5 (Reserve for Races 11-20)*
16)	Sat 11 Sep	15.00 Ipstone 5
17)	Sun 03 Oct	10.30 Madeley Half-Marathon
18)	Sun 17 Oct	11.00 Denstone Half-Marathon
19)	Sun 07 Nov	11.00 Werrington Six
20)	Sun 20 Nov	10.30 Eccleshall Ten

The reserve races (marked X1 & X2) are worth your consideration as points awarded on these will count towards your season's results if, as last happened in 1996, any of the designated 20 races are cancelled.

Race Results

Bare Wrist Run - Wednesday December 23rd

	Est	Act	Slow	Fast	Pos		Slow	Fast	Pos		Slow	Fast	Pos
Bryan Radford	29.40	29.57	0.17		1	1997							
Brian Hall	27.33	27.14		0.19	2	Simon Probert	0	0	1=	Rita Banks		3	1
Richard Shaw	30.21	30.45	0.24		3	Brian Hall	0	0	1=	Sue Smith	13		2
Geoff Shallcross	31.58	32.23	0.25		4	Bryan Radford	7		3	Pam Davies	18		3
Terry Murphy	27.55	28.21	0.26		5								
Jonathon Howell	24.40	25.09	0.29		6	1996							
John Clemens	25.20	24.48		0.32	7	Andrew Wilding		3	1=	Rita Banks	6		1
Andrew Batt	28.40	28.05		0.35	8	Dave Upton		3	1=	Elaine Statham		9	2
Dave Gillick	26.10	27.03	0.53		9=	Roger Bolsover		12	3	Monica D		11	3
Phil Sharratt	33.15	34.08	0.53		9=								
John Haine	33.20	34.19	0.59		11	1995							
Lew Badger	26.20	27.21	1.01		12	Syd Carnell	3		1	Margaret Shaw		5	1
Brian Coker	29.00	27.38		1.22	13	John Elson	5		2	Elaine Statham		10	2
Mac McCoig	33.10	34.39	1.29		14	Chris Franklin	6		3	Sue Smith		16	3
Gerry Barnard	32.23	33.59	1.36		15								
Bernie Priekulis	27.00	25.19		1.41	16	1994							
Vernon Olivant	26.40	24.56		1.44	17	Richard Shaw	2		1=	Angela Coker	11		1=
George Kay	32.06	30.20		1.46	18	Jonathon Howell	2		1=	Elaine Statham	11		1=
Chris Barlow	28.10	25.27		2.43	19	Mac McCoig	3		3	Carol Lorimer	20		3
Angela Coker	30.00	29.37		0.23	1								
Rose Gillick	29.30	30.21	0.51		2								
Sue Smith	36.02	34.49		1.13	3								
Pat Radford	40.40	39.22		1.18	4								
Sue Haine	36.00	37.20	1.20		5								
Pam Davies	32.23	34.07	1.44		6								
Paula McLellan	40.00	37.48		2.12	7								
Lorna Madon	42.58	40.38		2.20	8								
Rose Priekulis	43.00	40.36		2.24	9								
Monica Darlington	40.35	38.07		2.28	10								

Eccleshall 10 - Sunday November 15th

Vernon Olivant	1.06.40	Bernie Priekulis	1.10.06
Kevin Uzzell	1.10.51	Roger Bolsover	1.12.00
Chris Barlow	1.12.22	Lew Badger	1.12.47
Simon Fielder	1.13.16	Simon Probert	1.15.40
Terry Murphy	1.17.51	Pam Davies	1.21.36
Gerald Davis	1.22.08	Mac McCoig	1.23.28
Richard Shaw	1.24.23	Kym Billington-Baddley	1.30.57
Peter Salt	1.37.22	Sue Smith	1.37.34
Gill Pointon	1.37.43	Angela Glendenning	1.39.05
Paula McClellan	1.39.40		

PD 1st F45, SS 1st F50,

Cheddleton Christmas Pudding 10k - Saturday November 28th

Vernon Olivant	38.	Simon Fielder	42.21
Peter Williams	43.25	Roger Westhead	
Angela Glendenning		Paula McLellan	

AG 1st F60

XV Marathon de Calvia, Majorca - Sunday December 6th

Vernon Olivant	2.59.49	Lew Badger	3.12.56
George Kay	3.32.17		

GK 2nd V60

XV ½ Marathon de Calvia, Majorca - Sunday December 6th

Dave Gillick	1.30.04	Rose Gillick	1.47.17

RG 1st F50

Christmas Cracker - Sunday December 20th

John Clemens	52.32	Jonathon Howell	54.18
Dave Gillick	57.00	Jayne Metcalfe	61.02
John Haines	65.00	Richard Shaw	69.13
Frank Shepley	70.00	Angela Glendenning	79.20
Sue Smith	86.00	Lynne Foster	86.01

SMM Club Championship 1998 - Marathon Table

Vernon Olivant	2.59.49(50)	Bernie Priekulis	3.05.46(45)
Lew Badger	3.09.10(41)	Simon Fielder	3.10.09(38)
Kevin Uzzell	3.10.22(37)	Simon Probert	3.22.20(36)
Bill Clarke	3.28.30(35)	George Kay	3.32.17(34)
Russell Hall	3.32.36(33)	Terry Murphy	3.44.01(32)
Chris Barlow	3.44.57(31)	Peter Williams	4.05.01(30)
Richard Shaw	4.28.38(29)	James McLellan	4.34.04(28)
Dave Baddley	5.00.19(27)	Peter Salt	5.42.44(26)
Celia Hargrave	3.17.50(50)	Ros Barker	3.24.46(45)
Rita Banks	3.38.03(41)	Jayne Metcalfe	3.52.05(38)
Margaret Shaw	4.19.28(37)	Kym Billington-Baddley	5.00.19(36)

Club Championship - 1998

Eligibility: To qualify for Club Championship points, members - first and second claim - must enter as "SMM" and run in club kit.

	GP1			GP2			GP3			GP4			Score
MEN	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
Dave Gillick		50		50	50		45	50		50			150
Vernon Olivant	36		37	34		50			50	45	37	50	150
John Clemens		41	45	45	45		50				50		145
Kevin Uzzell		45	50	36	41	41		45				37	136
Bernie Priekulis			41	41		45	41				38	45	131
Chris Barlow	50			37		37	38					31	125
Lew Badger		35	36		35	36		38	45			41	122
Simon Fielder	38	36	34	35	37	35	37	41	41	38	35	38	117
Dave Hargrave	41						35				41		117
Roger Bolsover	37	38	38	33		38	31	36	38				114
Simon Probert	31	37	35	32	38	34		37			34	36	112
Gerald Davis	34					32	34			41	36		109
Tony Bridgewood	32	34	33	31	34		30	35	37				105
Terry Murphy			32	30	33	33	28	34	36		33	32	102
Peter Williams	33						29		35			30	98
Richard Shaw	30	33	30		30	30	27		34			29	97
Mac McCoig		32	31		31	31		33					96
Peter Salt			28			29	23		33		30	26	92
Gerry Barnard		31	29		32		26						89
James McLellan	28			28			22				31	28	87
Dave Baddley	29						25				32	27	86
Brian Coker	45						36						81
Bill Clarke					36							35	71
George Kay							33			37		34	70
John Haine				29			24						53
Russell Hall											45	33	45
Jonathon Howell				38									38
Jim Brough	35												35
Robin Cope							32						32
LADIES													
Celia Hargrave	50						50				50	50	150
Rita Banks	38	41	45	45	50		38	50			45	41	145
Ros Barker	45	45		50			45				41	45	140
Pam Davies	34	38	38		45	50	37		50		38		138
Margaret Shaw		36			41		35	45				37	123
Kym Billington-Baddley	36			36	38	45	32				36	36	117
Angela Glendenning	32	35		34	37	37	29		45				117
Gill Pointon			37	35		38	31						106
Barbara Brough	35						33				37		105
Paula McLellan	33	34	36	33	36	36	30						102
Angela Coker	41	50	50				41						91
Jayne Metcalfe	37		41									38	79
Rose Gillick				41			36						77
Sue Smith				38		41	34						75
Lynne Foster		37		37									74
Sue Haine				32			28						60

Subject to ratification

Group 1 Newcastle 7 — Milton 10k — Stone 10k — *Group 2* Trentham Trailblazer 15k — John Oultram 10 — Eccleshall 10

Group 3 Stafford Half — Leek Half — Madeley Half — *Group 4* Milford 21 — Stafford 20 — Asy Marathon