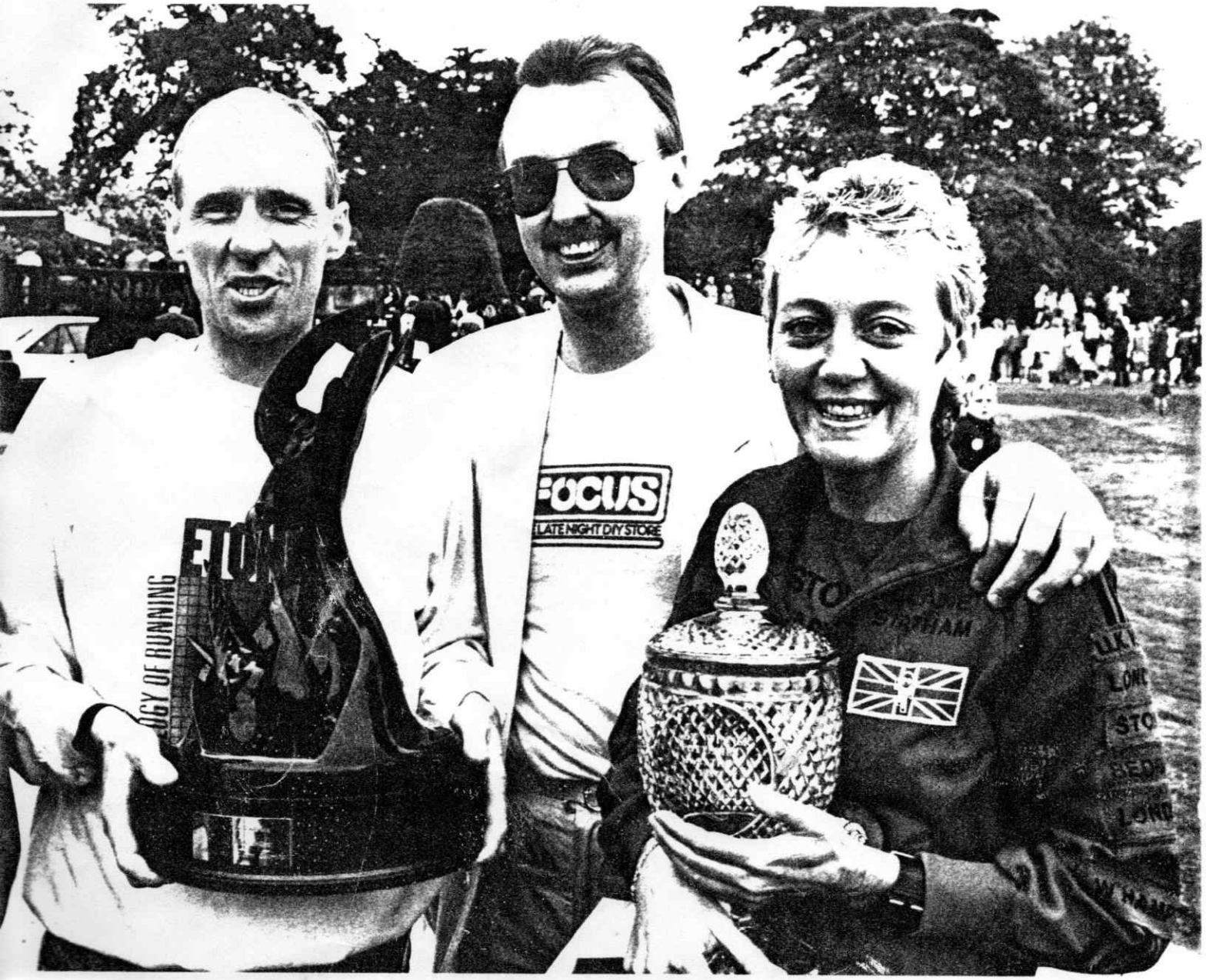
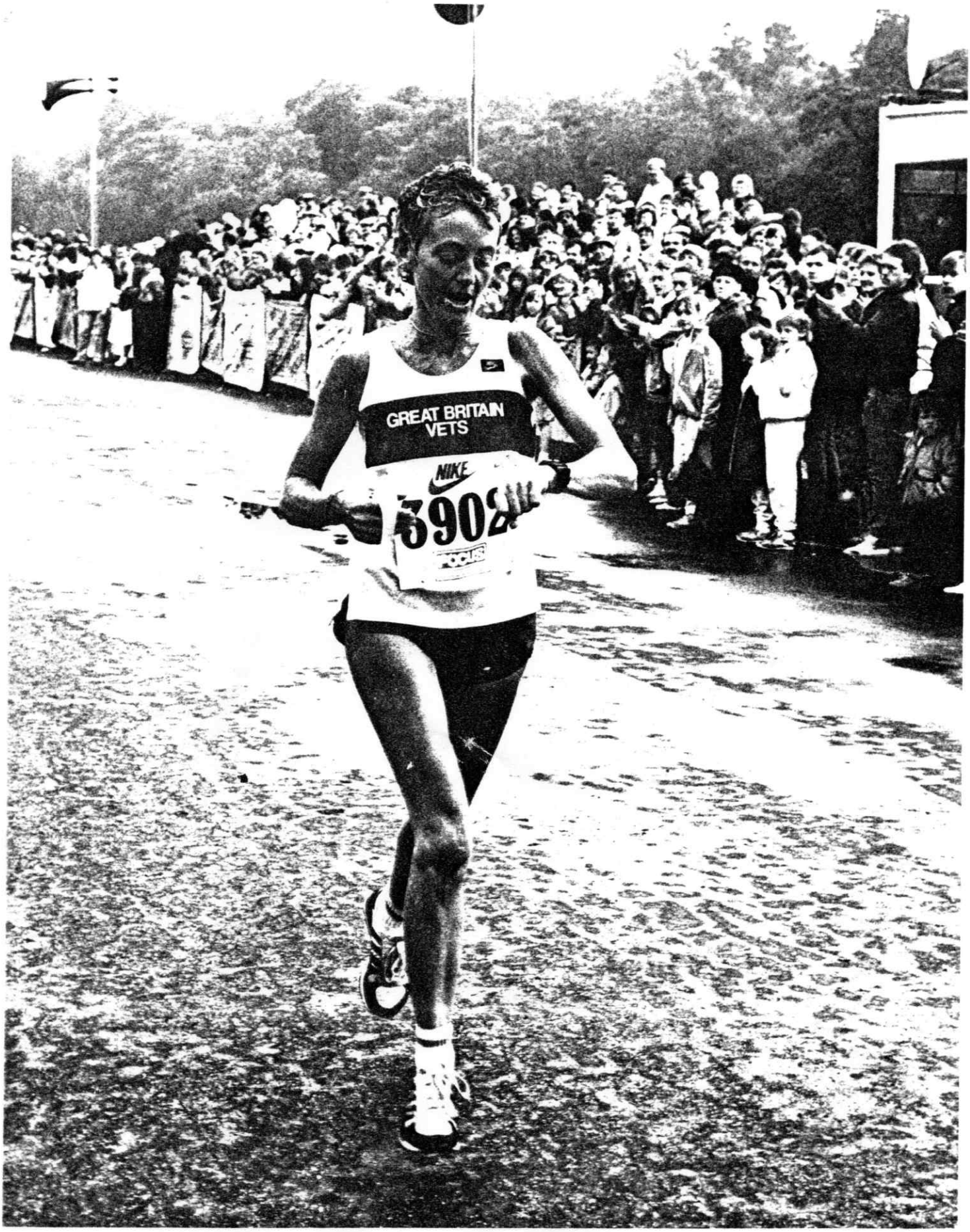
AN SMM INTERNATIONAL



SAPIENTIA

SEPTEMBER

1987


GREAT BRITAIN
VETS
NIKE

POTTERIES MARATHON REPORT, 1987

The Potteries Marathon, 1987, failed to live up to its sunny reputation. However, the conditions were almost ideal for running. The rain varied from drizzle to torrential. There was little wind but perhaps it was a little cold.

The race this year was marked by an international team event for veterans. The club was represented by Elaine Statham in the Ladies' Great Britain Veterans team, which Don Shelley hoped to put against a team from the rest of Europe. However, on the day the European Vets were represented by a lady from Eire.

The start was moved back from its usual position before the roundabout, owing to road works. This gave the front runners an immediate right turn onto the A34 from the line by the old Trentham Gardens gates.

In spite of torrential rain and cool conditions, the crowd support was fantastic. The numbers were perhaps not as great as usual but the vocal encouragement more than made up for the deficiency. The 26 Stone Master Marathoners who ran, making over 1% of the finishers, must also be extremely grateful for the help and encouragement from non- running members and their families at the roadside or on their bikes. The Irish lady, Ann Reede, who came second in the race, was highly impressed by the local support for the race in such atrocious weather for race watching. She was somewhat perplexed at the locals referring to her as "Duck". She thought for a while that this was a reference to the weather and did not realise until she was half way round that this was the local term of endearment!

PERSONAL BESTS

The number of PBs reflects the excellent running conditions. Congratulations are due to all who finished, particularly to those who achieved a PB on such a hilly course, and especially to Elaine who surpassed even her own expectations to win an international and to do a PB and a course record.

Monica's excellent first place in the over 50s class with a record is an example to us all, a great run, winning herself a rather nice cut glass rose bowl.

Altogether a great day for running, if not for watching, and the club represented itself well in numbers, good times and winners.

RESULTS		
George Kay	2.40.33	
Pete Moseley	2.44.55	PB by 5 minutes
Tom Cronin	2.46.04	PB by 2½ minutes
Lew Badger	2.49.16	
Elaine Statham	2.50.52	PB by 1½ minutes: course and NSRRA vets records
Dave Gillick	2.57.28	
Tony Bell	2.58.23	
David Price	3.05.46	PB
Simon Barber	3.10.02	
Roger Westhead	3.10.19	
Rose Gillick	3.11.25	
James McLellan	3.16.13	
Derek Palmer	3.17.18	
Ray Booth	3.18.28	
Dave Upton	3.19.53	
Peter Smith	3.25.33	
Mike Thelwell	3.40.37	
Mike Fletcher	3.41.15	PB by 10 minutes
Monica Darlington	3.42.04	over 50s course record
Mick Statham	3.43.09	
Eddie Atkinson	3.45.36	
Gerry Moss	3.46.54	PB
Jean Fuller	3.49.45	
Lesley Badger	4.03.18	
Frank Collis	4.16.00	PB by 15 minutes
Derek Jackson	4.19.28	Excuse! - I was pulling a rickshaw. Come on, Derek, pull the other one!

BEECH TROGLODYTE

Chairman's Log STARDATE AUTUMN, 1987

As the starship SMM thunders on into another glorious year, with our runners bringing credit to us all in race after race, here are a few words to those who are seeking to improve or regain their fitness by non-running pursuits. I will explain about swimming, walking, biking, weights and aerobics.

SWIMMING If you don't know about swimming, imagine lying in a cold bath in the middle of a riot with someone squirting TCP up your nose. There are not many adults in the average swimming bath because the children have drowned most of them. They do this by jumping on adults from the side, or attacking them from underneath. The children scream all the time. Sometimes you see a pretty lady in a bathing suit, but that's about the only good thing about the pastime. Most of the time you are fighting for your life. Swimming is excellent for teaching the runner how lucky he is to be on dry land.

WALKING For those unfamiliar with walking it is a bit like running but it takes twice as long. Tell your spouse you may be out for days, as even a short distance can take you far into the night. One benefit of walking is that you get more involved with the wildlife. You are moving more slowly, so it doesn't run away. If you see a rabbit, stop and stand quite still and it will do the same. This can go on for hours until you or the rabbit realises how silly you look. If a dog rushes at you, the walker has more time to plan his response. Stop, talk softly to the animal and hold out your hand. Stroke the creature gently and it will soon roll over on its back, wave its legs in the air and smile foolishly. This gives you the opportunity to kick it sharply in the ribs. Walking teaches the runner how lucky he is to be able to move quickly and not get involved in anything.

BIKING Bicycles are a bit like they used to be except that they weigh less, have the brake levers in a funny place, and are more difficult to balance. They have a complex system of dozens of cogwheels, which after a lot of fuss delivers two gears, one incredibly low and one incredibly high. It is not possible to change gear without first getting off the bike. Riding a bike is much slower than running, and more dangerous than walking because you keep falling off. Biking teaches you that there is in fact a worse experience than running uphill, and that is biking uphill.

WEIGHTS The trouble with weights is that you cannot develop a full set of muscles without having a full set of muscles to develop. To illustrate what I mean, there are a number of machines which are aimed at developing shoulder muscles but you can't work at them at all unless you have some shoulder muscles already. For example, I have so far got no sign of any lots, or slots, or pects, or traps or slabs or something, so I just lie in the shoulder machines and twitch. I can't move the handles, much less the handles plus tens of kilograms. The main thing in weights is to try not to cry. Weight lifting is very good for teaching the runner that running is not the most stupid sport in the world after all.

AEROBICS For this sport you get a lot of inoffensive looking people in a gym jumping up and down on their toes, doing no harm to anyone. Then suddenly they start to leap around in a very alarming fashion at a speed quite impossible for a normal athlete to sustain. Most of these people look like ordinary housewives and pensioners, but they must spend at least five hours a day pushing their bodies to the limit. They have enormous endurance, able to continue at maximum effort for an hour with no sign of fatigue. They are incredibly intelligent, able to learn in seconds routines more complicated than "Swan Lake". Most of them are double-jointed and can quite easily put one big toe into their ear and scratch between their shoulder blades with the other one, all in synchronisation with the latest Meat Loaf record.

Aerobics teaches an athlete to be humble.

I hope the above is helpful. If any member has any queries about any of the above, please address them to me. c/o The Trent Hospital, Stone.

RUNNING OVER THE HILL

Down the cottaged valley road, flat
and smooth, around fleece-wrapped fat
tourists taking the Sunday walk,
past their polished parked
cars , I pick
my route, quick-
footed as a dressage pony, then turn
to trot uphill, butting into mountain
territory, muscles pulling, rhythmic,
tight-reined, without wanting to look back

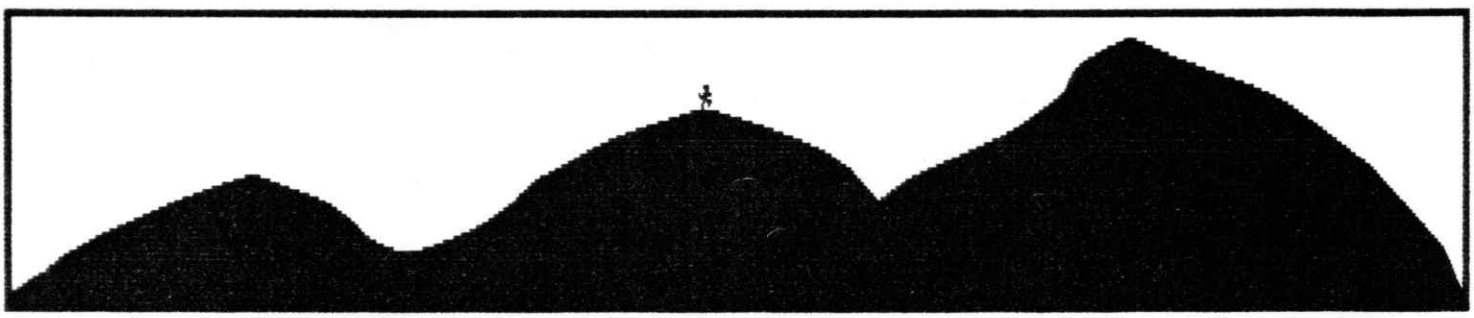
Between huge sphinx paws rests
the great hunched hill-beast's
scarred head. Through muffling cloud
sun slants, soothes him into benign mood.

Chase harder, senses quicken, race to hunt,
to kill my dormant
prey: one last charge and he will be
beaten,
my foot on his neck. But the clouds harden,
iron-grey, and the track crumbles,
throwing me from my purpose. I stumble
into the arena, where the lion
roars, turns gladiator, chains broken,
snares me with steel-mesh
stings me with whiplash
hail. Giant limbs bend;
he heaves the ground,
tilting it towards me, sliding me back
feet skidding on wet rock.

but I fight on - inch by inch
to the top - sobbing - lungs punched
empty. Brief triumph, then I am thrown
forward, off balance, jolting down.
Joints grind like an oil-drained engine.
An out-of-control machine
I crash jarring into the scree;
clouds crowd, streaming abuse on me.

Sheep survive here - pick
about like tick-
birds on a rhinoceros.
The mountain settles behind me as
unconcerned as the lion for a fly
he won't chase, once he's flicked it from
his eye.

David Duncombe



TRI-ING AGAIN

Another season of triathlons has arrived and true to form has arrived too soon for my promise of regular, uninterrupted and serious training.

That was always the excuse when I was just running and now it has become threefold with the additional elements of training to complete. However, the season started with a couple of warm-ups with the local events of the Stone and Trentham, not that you can really refer to Trentham lake as a warm-up, even with a short swim of 650 metres. Dave Dobson could probably describe the swim in vivid terms! We did expect by June of course that the lake would have been warmed by the summer sun. Actually, all that happened was that it was two inches deeper as a result of all the June rainfall.

Two weeks before this, the first of the British Triathlon Association Grand Prix series had been held at New Brighton on the Wirral.

This was to be the first of my events in the minimum of five that I have to complete for points in the series and to compete in the finals at Milton Keynes in September.

On my arrival at New Brighton amidst a howling gale and torrential rain, I discovered that the swim course had been moved from the Mersey estuary to an open-air salt-water pool at New Brighton with a water temperature of 51 degrees. It had also been shortened to 700 metres so that nobody would die from staying in too long.

I actually got changed ready for the swim, prepared my bike and then watched the first wave of competitors, men under 40, take to the water. Of about 40 that went in, about half either had to be pulled out or couldn't continue to the cycling stage. The half that did get on their bikes had great difficulty in staying on them as they took off along the seafront for the 30 mile cycling leg.

At that moment, I thought that as I do triathlons for pleasure and for fitness, perhaps swimming in 51 degrees and being blown off my bike was not really in my best interests and so I withdrew, got dressed and drove home feeling as if somehow I had failed in my duty as an athlete.

On reflection, I have decided that it was a a good decision after all and it gave me the rare chance of cheering on all the SMM team taking part in the Michelin 10.

So, my BTA Grand Prix assault had to wait until the end of June, when I competed in the Welsh Open at Barry Island, South Wales, in a sea swim of 1000 metres, 30 miles cycle race and 6½ mile run. A fine event albeit somewhat hilly in parts and a good result for me, with 3 hours 10 minutes.

Into July and the Redbridge Grand Prix event in Essex. Another atrocious day, wet and blustery, but an excellent venue. The swim was 900 metres in a lake - quite warm this time at 60! - then 30 miles of cycling through the Essex countryside (don't let anyone ever tell you Essex is flat!) and a 7½ mile run. An even better result of 3 hours 5 minutes and 58 seconds, and I actually caught sight at one stage of the man who is destroying all the vets this year, one Alf Engers, who seems to hold most of the UK cycle time trial records since the year dot.

With a little break in my programme to pop down to Welwyn Garden City for the BVAF Half Marathon Championship with the club team - by the way, what happened to the rest of you? - and then into August with the Tynedale Triathlon on Kielder Water, Northumberland.

It stated in the programme that at first glance it would appear that Kielder was miles from anywhere and at second glance you would realise you were right first time. It also said in the Northumbrian Water

handout, "No crowds...no parking problems". I'm not surprised; I don't suppose anybody can find it!
Seriously, apart from it being remote, it is a beautiful part of the country. A man-made lake of 2,674 acres and storage for 44,000 million gallons with a maximum depth of 170 feet, surrounded by Europe's largest man-made forest, and lots and lots of hills, all of which figured during the 45K cycle race and 10K run.
I suppose dear old Alf Engers didn't notice the hills but I'm sure he did notice the 57 degrees when we finally hit the water at the start of the 1000 metre swim.
I understand that some didn't make it, the organisers pulling them out after the 25 minute allowance.
We went off in age groups, under 40s, ladies, vets, and under 40s not in the GP series. With some satisfaction, us old uns overtook quite a few in the open class. Perhaps our blood is so thin that the cold doesn't affect us.
As I have already mentioned, a hilly cycle race on an out and back course (must have lost AE somewhere during this!) and finally a not quite so hilly run around the lake, but who needs hills at that stage?
I finished in 2 hours, 59 minutes and 32 seconds, a PB over the same distances and conditions of 13 minutes and very satisfying.
Mr Engers won the Vets of course and probably cycled back to London afterwards. He reminds me somewhat of our own GK.
He'd better watch out in London, Ripon and Milton Keynes in August and September.
Further reports of those battles to follow.

IVAN SAVAGE

GRAND JUMBLE SALE!!

FRANK JORDAN CENTRE, STONE

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, 10th OCTOBER, 1987

HELP NEEDED ON THE DAY BETWEEN NOON AND 4 P.M.

BRING JUMBLE TO THE CLUB ON THE PREVIOUS WEDNESDAY OR

TAKE IT TO THE RADFORDS BETWEEN THURSDAY AND SATURDAY OR

TAKE IT WITH YOU WHEN YOU ATTEND THE GRAND SALE ITSELF, BUT

WHATEVER YOU DO, DO SOMETHING TO HELP MAKE IT A SUCCESS, PLEASE.

Please let Monica Darlington know if you are able to help in any of the ways indicated above.

ULTRA UPDATE

Since my contribution to the last sapiedition, my training for the Two Bridges has gone according to plan. I have entered the event and today received acknowledgement. The commitment has grown and I am looking forward with confidence to 29th August.

TRAINING

The Wolverhampton Marathon was not quite the PB I had hoped for. Seven and a half minute miles were too much and I faded drastically after 10 miles, crossing the line in 3 hours 32. With a positive eye to the future, I soon recovered my confidence to run further but slower. I decided to commit the next few months solely to the ultra. London was 5 weeks later and I decided to run well within myself and do a few miles or so after the finish. I got to Westminster in 3 hours 44 minutes running time, doing each half in 1:52. Having collected my medal I went straight on instead of turning left for my space blanket: "Oi! where do you think you're going?" - this from a very official marshall. On being told that I was an ultra distance runner needing another 4 or 5 miles he reverently moved the barrier and ushered me through. 30.7 miles in 4 hours 24 minutes - it felt great to have gone beyond the distance and to have finished running. It required a great deal of will-power to run beyond the finish funnels in London, especially having to walk those few yards queuing for a medal, so, contrary to advice from Elaine, George, John Bourne et al I decided to do the extra miles before the start of the Potteries Marathon.

I ran from the gardens to the bakeries on the A34 and back to the start - just in time - with 5.8 miles already done. It was a great day for a run and the pre-start mileage made it much easier to do the extra beyond the 26.2. I was slowing towards the end with the second half 4 minutes slower than the first but I had done the pre-race miles too quickly. However, I beat the 30 mile time at London by 9 minutes.

I have done a 27 mile training run since, and a 20 miles while on holiday in Austria.

Running at 2000 feet above sea level is certainly more arduous than at home - we did a great deal of walking, some to 8000 feet. Walking at this height is the equivalent of running at 8 min/mile pace at home on pulse rate assessment. I am hoping that the 50 miles run in the first week and walking 6 or 7 hours a day at altitude in the second week will have been good stamina training.

This coming Sunday is as good as four weeks before the race and I intend to do my last long run: 10 or 11 miles from home, then into the Potteries Marathon course at Meir and run the 19 or 20 miles of the Potteries course in reverse to finish at the Milton 10K. I am thankful that Pete Gent has volunteered to run these last 20 miles with me.

The last 3 weeks or so will be a tapering period physically, but building a positive mental approach to completing the distance. A time...? To RUN the distance is the prime aim but a time is totally dependent on weather conditions, hot and humid will slow me down and about 8 minute/mile pace will give me 5 hours 10-20 minutes. If there is no wind and cool drizzle 8 m/m would give a wild dream of a time under 5 hours.

The race starts at 10 a.m. on 29th August. George Kay and Geoff Covell will also be running. The course starts in Dunfermline, goes to the Kincardine Bridge over the Firth of Forth, then 20 miles along the south side of the Firth, over the Forth Bridge, finishing in Rosyth. Elaine will be our support car driver. If you are in the area your support will be more than welcome. If not, a few positive thoughts at lunch time would make all the difference.

BEECH TROG.

PULSE RATE UPDATE

Cardiac Recovery Index = CRI

Pulse Rate = PR

PR taken over 10 seconds and multiply by 60

CRI = (PR at end of run) - (PR 1 minute, 50 seconds later)

TOUR OF TAMESIDE, 1987
JULY 26th to AUGUST 1st.

Ron Hill broke his wrist doing it. Gerry Barnard flies in from the Arabian Gulf and Paul White motors over 100 miles each day to take part in it. This unique event seems to have its attractions. You bet it does.

Eddy Hellebuyk. that modest young man and remarkable runner from Belgium, regained the championship title he last held in 1984. Eddy won 5 of the 6 stages, setting up 3 course records in the process, and was prevented from making a clean sweep of it only by Steve Brace, who managed to get a foot in front of him on the final stage, a very brave and determined effort by Steve, who had to settle for second place in all the previous stages.

Our members had differing fortunes. Paul welcomed the cool and wet conditions more than Gerry and again, in his last year in the group, took the over 60s award, knocking 4 minutes 14 off his 1986 time and 13 minutes 33 off 1985. The build up towards his planned 4 minute mile on his 80th birthday is nicely on schedule.

Gerry had an excellent start but disappointingly faded on the later stages and was not totally happy with his overall time.

TOTAL FOR 52¼ MILES: Gerry: 6.33.11
Paul: 7.36.25

For those considering taking up the challenge of this gruelling, but wonderfully rewarding event, here are the '87 targets to beat:

TEAM RACES (FOUR TO RUN, THREE TO COUNT)

LADIES: 18.28.23 No separate category for lady vets but the members of the winning team were all vets.

MEN VETS: 16.03.21

LADIES:
Lucinda Martin 5.29.22
35 Maureen Platt 5.53.32
40 M. Chippendale 6.17.33
45 Hetta Morath 6.50.45
50 Lola Small 6.28.09

Last: 8.26.56
Total entries: 598
Stage One: 560
Whole event: 521

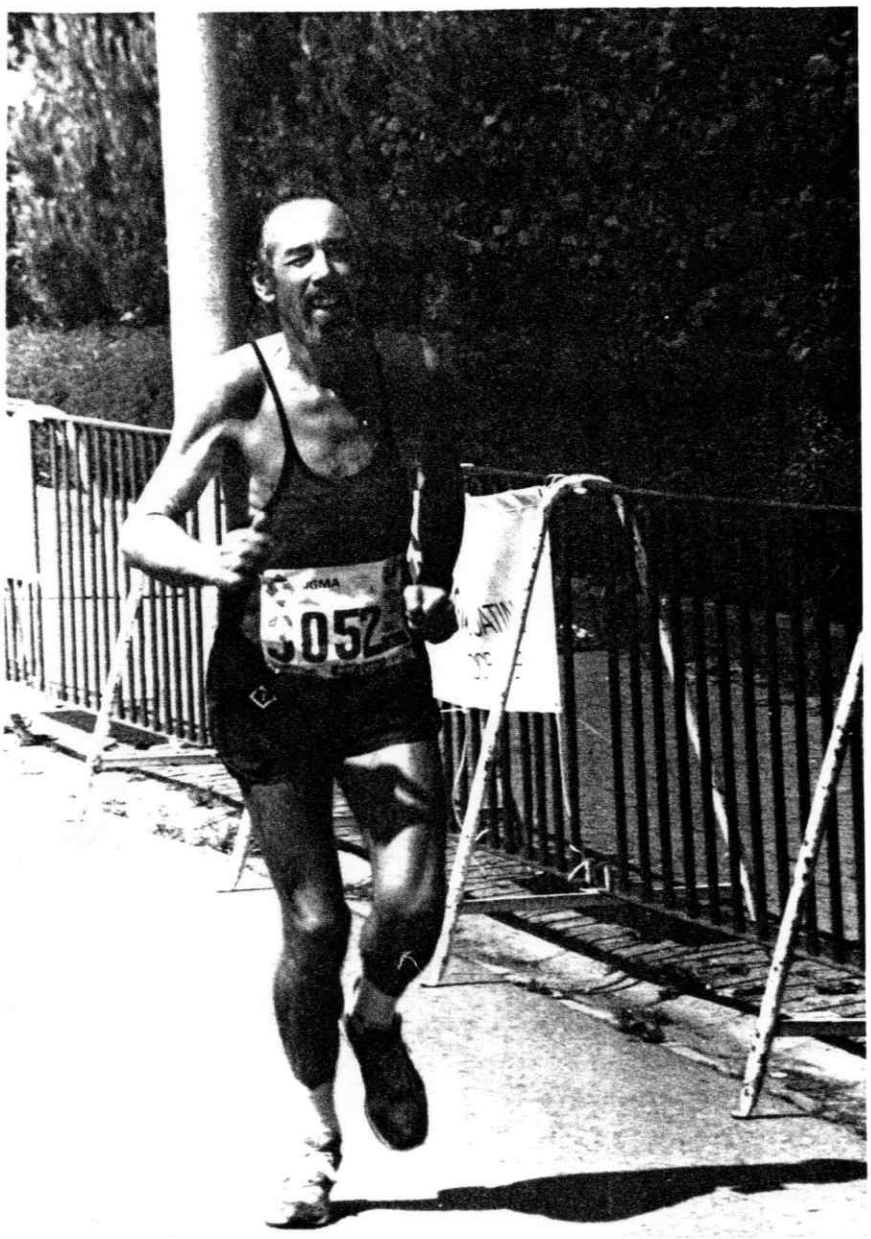
MEN:
Eddy Hellebuyk 4.29.21
40 John Bigham 4.58.20
45 Ron Hill + plaster cast 5.13.43
50 Pete Rogers 5.28.21
55 Noel Stanton 6.39.00
60 **Paul White 7.36.25**
Last: 9.53.39
Vet Ladies: 28 Vet Men: 183
27 172
26 156

Official descriptions of stages

SUNDAY	7 mile road, undulating
MONDAY	6 mile hill race, road and track, climbing to 1300 feet
TUESDAY	11 miles, mainly road, finishing uphill
WEDNESDAY	Rest day
THURSDAY	Half Marathon, road, 5 laps, moderately hilly
FRIDAY	6.3 mile X-country, last year hard, muddy this year
SATURDAY	9 mile canal, downhill from Mossley to canal system

PAUL WHITE

MEMBER'S PROFILE: NUMBER 17 GERRY BARNARD



Born London, 1934, but did not find running until 1977. Even then it was far removed from today's running, as my start was in Brunei, where I was egged on by my wife to join the local Hash House Harriers. This weekly jungle paper chase was a very popular event but did not require a great level of fitness to take part as the emphasis was more on it being a social gathering than an athletic meeting.

In 1980 our three year stay in Brunei came to an end and we moved to our present location, which is Bahrain in the Arabian/Persian Gulf. On finding that the Hash House Harriers existed here I went along and found an immediate difference. The jungle trails of Brunei, which very much controlled one's rate of progress, were replaced by wide open terrain and consequently the pace was that much quicker.

Plodding along on a run one day, I was surprised to hear others around me discussing their training for a forthcoming marathon.

A marathon! Here in Bahrain! They must be crazy, thought I. I was then told of how in 1979, to commemorate the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Bahrain, the HHH had organised a marathon and this had since become an annual event. Still difficult to believe that within a year I would be training with them, I was spurred on by a colleague who had got a bit carried away after reading a book about the Honolulu Marathon. A training programme was mapped out, smoking was given up, and the first marathon successfully completed in February, 1982. A time of 3.33.59 was pleasing and I managed to knock 50 seconds off this in London three months later, but then came 3.45 in Bolton and 3.54 in the Flying Fox, which were disappointing. Entering for the Flying Fox also provided me with the first opportunity to meet Terry and Monica, as I had joined the club by mail earlier that year after learning of its existence through an article in "Running" magazine. My wife and I had first visited Stone by narrowboat in 1972 and found much about it that we liked not the least being the friendliness of the natives, so Stone and a marathon club was an ideal combination.

Back to Bahrain where developments were taking place that were to have a significant effect on the local running scene.

It all really began with a defeat. Ron Hill had been brought over to take part in the 1982 marathon and had narrowly lost the race, the winner having made the decisive break when Ron experienced a mix-up in collecting a drink at an aid station. It seemed only right to bring Ron back for another shot at winning here and a group of runners came together to arrange this, the previous marathon organisers having been posted away. This group adopted a new name to indicate an interest in competition and became the BH3 Striders. Experienced gained in taking part in other marathons like the London pointed the way for us to follow, so the Bahrain International Marathon became a sponsored event. This allowed us both to upgrade the marathon and fund the race programme that was to follow.

It has to be explained that organised competitive running in Bahrain generally followed along the lines of other "emerging" nations in that this was in the hands of the military and catered almost exclusively for nationals. Although we have access to their modern American-run sports medicine and stadium facilities, up until 1982 the expatriate was pretty much limited to the annual marathon for competitive running.

A half marathon was laid on as a warm-up event for the 1983 marathon, and so good was the response that we were encouraged to start a race programme that soon covered the whole year. The weather here is very different Summer to Winter, Summer being from May through September, when we experience a high temperature and humidity situation, where one can be saturated just standing still, let alone doing anything energetic. Winter, on the other hand, can be very pleasant and is more conducive to distance work. Our marathon is run in late February to allow for a good build-up of training. We have a varied programme of races at this time over distances up to 20 miles. Despite the above remarks about our Summer, our members told us that they would still like to have some competition, so for the third year now we are into our "Summer Series", where each month we race over 5 and 8 K with the best three results in each category being counted towards a Series Award. Naturally, times are slower than races over equivalent distances in the Winter and we have to ensure that hydration is maintained. Time trials are run over our 8K course at other times of the year, and Standards Awards certificates presented according to time and age group. Striders membership runs pretty consistently around the 120-130 mark, despite the comings and goings that are a part of an expatriate's life. Besides the competitive side, we also meet in the Summer for a weekly social training run followed

by a swim and a BBQ. This are held on our Friday, our day off in this Moslem country. From November, the Friday run is a morning training run for the February marathon. We use a training programme laid down by Bill Squires and Amby Burfoot, which was published in "Runner's World" a few years ago, and we have taken many who have not run 5 miles before up to a 20 mile training run in the three months of the programme, and then on to complete a successful first marathon. That, in my experience, makes all the organising worthwhile, to see the look of joy, and relief, on a first timer's face on crossing that finishing line. Training as a group has been a boon for all of us, not only first timers, as the miles seem to slip by more easily when running in company. Sub-groups develop on these runs naturally, as age and fitness decree, but there is always someone to run with.

For my own running the 1983 Bahrain International Marathon was the first where I was both on the organising committee and taking part in the race. There was no adrenalin flowing when the gun went off, just a feeling of relief that so far things had gone to plan and somehow the running was an anti-climax. Anyone reading this who has been in the same position will know what I mean but London in April restored my confidence with a PB of 3.25.

17 marathons have been completed to date with a PB in 1986 of 3.11.24. I think that i can do better but it is a bit of a race against time as well. Just harking back to those 1983 Bolton and Flying Fox results, I now realise that the poor performances are attributable to the fact that it is almost impossible to carry out marathon training here between May and October. We do sometimes kid ourselves that we can compete on residual fitness, but the harsh reality of finding the fallacy of this midway through a marathon can be a painful experience.

Running has changed my life completely and is still providing new experiences. A recent example of this concerns an annual event run in Bahrain each March, which is our ultra relay. Originally a solo 50 mile race, it was augmented by a three man relay race over the same course when it became difficult to find enough runners interested in doing the whole thing. The relay has very simple rules, 3 men and a support car with the freedom to decide when and where to change runners. It just so happened that Ian Thompson was on a business trip at that time this year and when one of my team had to withdraw, Ian kindly accepted an invitation to replace him, without knowing anything about who he had volunteered to run with. Well, if I tell you that we covered the 50 miles in 4.28.30 and lost by less than 4 minutes to a team of local runners with a collective age of about half of our 132 years, it will give you some sort of an idea of what sort of experience that was. We reckoned that Ian covered half the total distance, and I ran a couple of miles less than our third runner. It was interesting comparing notes on strategy after the race. We were changing over every 3 to 5 minutes, where others were running up to 10K at a time.

Running, as my wife has it, has taken over my life. Certainly, much of my time is taken up with organising races, compiling results, preparing our club newsletter, etc, but I still find time to train and enjoy racing whenever I can. I have also got into cycle racing since discussing alternative training with Ernest Dudley. Our road system is mostly of a good standard and cycling safe as long as you keep your wits about you.

Living out of England has meant that thus far I have not had as much contact with other SMM members as I would like but I do know that whenever I spot that familiar uniform, I am assured of a welcome. long may it be so!

Malvern Midsummer Marathon

Alan White

I don't know whether it's a compliment to our sport or not, but have you noticed how every activity that goes on for quite a time is called a marathon these days? Only this week I've read accounts of darts, swimming, snooker pool and even drinking marathons. So when Keith Davies, hearing that I was off running yet again, invited me to join him on the Malvern Midsummer Marathon, I didn't really expect much trouble. It was carefully explained that the distance involved would be 35 miles rather than the statutory 26.2, but then we **would** be walking, and there would be drinks en route with time to stop awhile and savour them properly, instead of getting half of it up your nostrils and the other half down your chest. In addition there would be fruit cakes and other goodies, and there was even some talk of a pub stop!

It didn't turn out to be quite like that in the event. In fact, in several important respects the experience was uncannily similar to the by now familiar sensations of the pukka marathon. The start was much earlier and before 5 o'clock one midsummer morning my bike and I were keeping the blackbirds and other songsters company as I made my way to the rendezvous with two demented companions.

BREAKFAST

The hour from 7 to 8 was spent drinking gallons of tea and coffee in a church hall tucked in under the eastern slopes of the Worcester Beacon. There were also cornflakes and jam butties, and a fine feast, in contrast with the usual pre-marathon asceticism. For all that it ought to have felt relaxed, there was still a buzz of nerves in the air; not quite the same widespread preoccupation with the emptying of the bowel but a slightly distraught mood of apprehension. There were some of the same breed of bad jokes too.

As a runner I found the start weird. We stood pressed together at the foot of a 1 in five hill and at the drop of a handkerchief set off at a smart walk, chattering like magpies. Round two corners and suddenly it was a race. It felt like a race. People started to cut corners and cross the road illegally to gain a bit of an advantage. Without breaking into a run, we arrived at the first checkpoint, on top of the Worcester Beacon, breathless and perspiring.

DIRECTIONS

A punch was put in our cards, which hung around our necks, and we jogged downhill, looking at the instructions, which were a mixture of the practical and the lyrical, a tribute to the organisers, the Bristol branch of the Long Distance Walkers' Association, that we only went astray twice on a complex walk. There were more than 200 separate instructions.

The route was a delight for most of the way, threading through orchards, woods, villages, tiny hamlets, along leafy lanes, with a splendid climax along the spine of the southern Malvern Hills. We had already climbed the northern part at the beginning. There was even a picturesque town for good measure, Ledbury, well after the 20 mile point, by which time the wanderers were well scattered, and plastered liberally with mud collected on the less pleasant parts of the route. Some of those sunken lanes were glutinous in the extreme. There was difficulty in keeping the trainers on the feet at times. Not surprising, then, that two elderly ladies in Ledbury clutched each other nervously as we went by and one asked the other: "What's happened to them?".

The refreshment stops along the way were few and far between, but havens of rest and sustenance when they came. Keith usually lit up his pipe, banishing any lingering thoughts that we might be involved in an athletic event. The pub stop never happened. We were so mud besplashed that no landlord would have let us in: we didn't even try.

SAUSAGES AND MASH

After a blistering progress over the last spectacular miles, a brief rainstorm, we finally dropped anchor in the church hall and tucked into bangers and mash. Total time: 10 hours 15, but don't tell anybody.

MORNING RUN

Shaking off night and the town
I run towards the fields at dawn
hardly conscious of my padding feet
thudding dully along the street
to skid and swish on to the grass
and splash, stumbling, through yesterday's
puddles.
The fresh breeze slaps my face
into a sharper awareness.
Boorish car headlights ridicule
the old man coaxing his bicycle
on his work-journey over the hill,
where the sun, a glowing coal,
is stirred to life in the ash-
grey sky.

In the houses lights flash
on and off like a shower of sparks.
Awake now, I turn, hurrying back,
bringing the sunlight to help me see
through the problems of the day.

DAVID DUNCOMBE

MEMBERSHIP NEWS AUTUMN 1987

There have been eight new members so far, three of which are already listed on your address list - Lindsay Johnston, Angela Glendenning and Brian Hall. The others are:

Ermanna Collinson, wife of Bob and living at the same address
Roy Preece, friend and colleague of Clive Wraight
Phil Husband, who moved to Stone after competing in the Flying Fox
Terry Murphy, friend and colleague of Lew Badger, and known to many of us from NSRAA
Kevin Uzzell, friend and colleague of Pete Moseley

The addresses of these last four are listed below, together with some change of address detail for existing members. We welcome all our new members and look forward to sharing many hours of training and racing with them. Already I have been talked through a hot and hilly 16 miler by the valiant efforts of Phil and Kevin!

Much Sapientia

Monica

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