



# The Lions Tale

Stainland monthly newsletter



Paul Armitage

### From The Chair

A few words from the chairperson about the previous months activities and what we can look forward to in November.

Susan Cash

### Race Reports

A detailed summary of race reports from October. As always, plenty of people in action all around the UK and abroad.

Various

### Contributors

We have a bumper edition this month, with contributions from Steve Hallam, Stephen Hall, Joanne Hirst and Richard Hand.

## From the Chair

### Paul Armitage



### Is it really November already?

I am not sure why it is, but this year seems to be moving quickly to a conclusion and the man in the big red suit will be with us in no time, and no I do not mean Jonny Cartwright or Steve Boyer at the Boxing Day fun run.

I mentioned last month the upcoming Marathons and I would like to congratulate all those on their performances, especially the first timers who have apparently inspired a few more to enter next year already. One story from York does stand out above the others though with Sarah Lunt pushing herself through the pain barrier to finish the 26 miles. Having run behind Sarah a few times in races trying to catch her I know that she must have been really struggling during this race. While that is quite a feat the story does not end there, both Karen Thorne and Catherine O'Shaughnessy realising that Sarah was struggling, without hesitation, ran the last 12 miles in awful conditions with Sarah to see her to the finish. Not to be outdone Roy Lunt, after completing the 10-mile race ran out to meet her at 23 miles and completed the race with Sarah. I think Roy summed it up with his touching post on Facebook "A quick post to say never have I been more proud of the crazy woman that is Sarah Lunt as I am today." Another example of Lions courage and support that typifies our club.

Leon once again excelled himself this month with two "away" runs, one of which was actually at Heath. Firstly, at the Shears Arms where we are told that the pie is truly wonderful and worth travelling all that way for. Then we played host to our near neighbours The Sowerby Snails. I have to say we had a really good turnout of both Lions and Snails with most of the runs having a good mixture of the clubs in them. The evening was finished off with more pie, a quiz and a ceremonial joint cutting of the cake by the two Chairs. The Snails have promised to extend an invitation for a return at their base soon.

Only one Championship race in October with the Rombald's Romp taking centre stage over at the gateway to the dales of Ilkley. Taking place on the same day as the York marathon and 10 mile it was perhaps not as well attended as you may usually expect but a hardy crew of 16 Lions battled through some testing conditions to complete this and earn some valuable points.

Then came the big trip of the month to Amsterdam. The idea of a race overseas with a pride of Lions was muted and despite most of us booking separately a group of more than 30 lions descended on Amsterdam over the Friday and Saturday of the weekend when the city Marathon and Half Marathon were taking place. A mixture of accommodation was secured from the luxury of a 4-star hotel to a houseboat in slightly less salubrious

surroundings. Using smoke signals, we were able to coordinate meetings be that breakfast on the patio to frequenting a Jolly Sailor after the races where were all able to gather to imbibe soda water and celebrate our successes. That last bit might have been a little short of the truth.

And to the races, Stephen Hall and Leon Severn completed the Marathon in good time both looking strong throughout. Most of the rest of us completed the half with a few supporting us around the course very enthusiastically. No matter where you are you can always hear a Lion cheering and despite large numbers of runners around me I heard every voice belonging to a Lion as I neared the finish both at the roadside and as I entered the stadium where somehow 20 Lions, stood in the stands, were able to project over the hundreds of people to cheer me in as I am sure they did for every one of us. I was lucky I was so slow that they had all finished before me, but I felt quite a rush of emotion when I finally realised that I was the Paul whose name was being shouted.

The night that followed was a good one with all of us managing to meet up in the Jolly Sailor taking over one end of the bar and adding greatly to the local economy. I am sure that more specific stories of that night will emerge over time but it is not for me to tell them (Editor's note – you can have a lot of fun with 2 euros!).

As the festive season approaches our social committee have arranged the Christmas dinner on Friday December 7th sitting down to eat a 7.45pm at a very reasonable £24 per head, and then the Children's Christmas party which will be a Heath on Sunday December 9th from 3.30 to 6.30pm. Detail are on the forum and Facebook so please get your names down early. I am led to believe that Santa may be at the kid's one.

Finally the Vets season is coming to an end with the last race at Spen on Sunday 11th so it would be good if we can have a good turnout there to finish the season then straight into the cross country season the following week at Baildon, no rest for the wicked, we were under pressure last season as other clubs have started to catch us so let's wrestle our dominance back from them. If you are able it is the Vets presentation evening on the 14th December at the 6 Acres and we should have plenty to celebrate so it would be good to see a few Lions there.

# Lions Publicity Officer

## Susan Cash

### Summary of Race Reports for November Newsletter



**5 October 2018:** This week's highlights include **1<sup>st</sup> Lady for Lucy Collins at Littleborough 10K, 1<sup>st</sup> Lady for Mags Beever at the Holme Valley Trail Half Marathon and a meeting for Judith Greenwood, Lesley Henderson and Virginia Lewin with the legendary Ron Hill at the 5K race held in honour of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

#### **Ron Hill's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration Race**

Half a dozen Lions travelled over to Whitworth, Lancashire for the Ron Hill 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration race. The 5K route took in the scenic Cwm reservoir on a course which was a mixture of tarmac and gravel trails. Ron Hill, who is very well known and admired throughout the running world, was on hand to act as both starter and prize giver. Judith Greenwood was delighted to receive her age category prize from him.

Results: Paul Patrick 22:15, Aileen Baldwin 23:07 (2<sup>nd</sup> F65), Helen Hudson 23:55, Lesley Henderson 29:37, Judith Greenwood 30:45 (1<sup>st</sup> F70), Virginia Lewin 36:39

#### **Littleborough 10K**

Lucy Collins saw off all the competition at Littleborough 10K, finishing 1<sup>st</sup> Lady in a storming time of 39:00. The fast and flat route included a circuit of Hollingworth Lake.

Results: Lucy Collins 39:00, John Bannister 44:41, Gaby Ferris 46:31 (2<sup>nd</sup> F45), Jan King 54:13

#### **Stairway to Heaven**

Eight Lions took on the Stairway to Heaven in glorious sunny conditions on Saturday. The race, which takes place near Holmfirth, features stunning views. Jonny Cartwright was first Lion home in tenth place. Judith Greenwood won her age category, and there were age category placings for several other Lions.

Results: Jonny Cartwright 1:08:35 (3<sup>rd</sup> M40), Steve Boyer 1:29:04, Nicki Cartwright 1:38:20, Ray Mooney 1:38:40, Rikki Hammond 1:38:41 (3<sup>rd</sup> F50), Judith Greenwood 1:52:33 (1<sup>st</sup> F70), Alex Whyte 1:52:34, Jackie Barker 1:53:22 (3<sup>rd</sup> F60)

### Holme Valley Trail Half Marathon

Six Lions took on the Holme Valley Trail Half Marathon, which is a longer version of the Stairway to Heaven. Mags Beever was 1<sup>st</sup> Lady, and every Lion who participated either won or was placed in the top three in their age category.

Results: Mags Beever 1:43:46 (1<sup>st</sup> Lady), Kevin Robinson 1:47:19 (1<sup>st</sup> M40), Lorraine Naylor 1:54:55 (1<sup>st</sup> F40), Rachel Lumb 2:10:59 (2<sup>nd</sup> F50), Aileen Baldwin 2:15:03 (1<sup>st</sup> F60) Angela Lee 2:15:45 (3<sup>rd</sup> F50)



### Sandstone Trail

Three Lions raced the Sandstone Trail, seventeen miles along Cheshire's rocky spine with fantastic views over the Cheshire Plain to Wales and the Peak District. Andy Baird was first Lion home.

Results: Andy Baird 2:25:53, Jim Harris 2:44:57, Richard Crombie 2:45:01

### Pontefract Half Marathon

There is no stopping Gareth Knight this year. He just keeps getting faster with every race he enters. On Sunday, he posted a new personal best at Pontefract Half Marathon. The race, which is organised as a fundraiser for the local hospice, is an undulating out and back route on closed roads, with a twisting and turning finish through Pontefract town centre. Speaking after the race, Gareth said, "It was a great atmosphere with plenty of local support out on the route".

Result: Gareth Knight 1:33:03

**12 October 2018:** This week Stephen Hall continued his excellent season by winning the West Coast Half Marathon, taking 30 seconds off his personal best in the process.

### West Coast Half Marathon

Stephen Hall won the West Coast Half Marathon in a new personal best time of 1:18:23. Stephen finished nearly two minutes ahead of the field and looks to be in good form for his forthcoming Amsterdam Marathon. Unusually, the West Coast Half route is not a loop but a point-to-point, starting in Preston and finishing in Lytham St Annes.

### Kielder Marathon and Kielder Run Bike Run

Rikki Hammond made her marathon debut, completing the Kielder Marathon in 4:53:19. The route follows an almost entirely off-road course around the largest man-made lake in Northern Europe, Kielder Water, in Northumberland.

On the same day, Gav Dodd completed the Kielder Run Bike Run in 2:45:19. Starting and finishing at Leaplish Waterside Park the route follows the Lakeside Way, hugging the shores of Kielder Water.

### Rochdale Half Marathon and 10K

Three Lions tackled Rochdale Half Marathon, with a fourth opting for the 10K distance. Both races started and finished at Rochdale Town Hall, with the routes taking in some of the North West's most picturesque scenery.

Results (Half Marathon): Gaby Ferris 1:42:01, Helen Armitage 1:42:50 (2<sup>nd</sup> F50), Rebecca O'Neill 1:51:53 (2<sup>nd</sup> F40)

Result (10K): John Bannister 44:14

### Withins Skyline Fell Race

Lured in by the promise of a free Curly Wurly for all entrants, the Lions turned out in force for the Withins Skyline Fell Race. The six-mile route, which includes 820 feet of ascent, starts from Penistone Hill Country Park and makes a circuit of The Stoop and Top Withins, before returning by Bronte Bridge. No times are available yet, but provisional results showing race placings are as follows.

Results: Jonathan Collins (23<sup>rd</sup>), Ben Goodacre (79<sup>th</sup>), Paul Patrick (128<sup>th</sup>), Dave Culpan (133<sup>rd</sup>), Aileen Baldwin (152<sup>nd</sup>), Martin Wood (155<sup>th</sup>), Steve Boyer (191<sup>st</sup>), Angela Lee (195<sup>th</sup>), Ray Mooney (198<sup>th</sup>), Alex Whyte (239<sup>th</sup>), Jackie Barker (240<sup>th</sup>)



### Cumbrian Traverse

James Penson & John Allan took on another of their trademark epic challenges, completing the Cumbrian Traverse, a 35-mile run across the Lake District with 21 peaks and 12,000 feet of ascent. With support from Jim Harris, they achieved the targeted time, finishing at Keswick within 12 hours of setting off.

### **Chester Marathon and Metric Marathon**

Chester is one of the UK's most popular marathons, with a fast course through the historic city centre and out into the countryside through the beautiful Cheshire and North Wales villages. The route takes the runners past the Roman walls and amphitheatre, the Medieval Rows and the city's cathedral, before a section alongside the River Dee and an unforgettable finish on the racecourse. A shorter metric marathon option is available too. In the full marathon, Anthony Mott posted a personal best time, while Michelle Rogerson (making her debut at this distance) ran well to finish in under 4 hours.

Results (Marathon): Anthony Mott 3:24:10, Michelle Rogerson 3:56:30

Results (Metric Marathon): Michael Dunning 2:10:04, Ian Hoskins 2:23:17

### **Forest and Moors Trail Half Marathon**

Ken Chilcott ran the Forest and Moors Trail Half Marathon in Dalby Forest in just over three hours, declaring it "tougher than expected".

Result: Ken Chilcott 3:08:37

**19 October 2018: This week Sean Thompson set a new V50 club marathon record, and there were personal bests for several Lions at the Yorkshire Marathon, Yorkshire 10 Mile and Manchester Half Marathon.**

### **Yorkshire Marathon and Yorkshire 10 Mile**

Sean Thompson, who has been running well all year, beat his own V50 club record at the Yorkshire Marathon. Sean took just over two minutes off his previous best time to cross the line in 3:02:15. Speaking after the race, he said, "It was great to see all the Lions enjoying their achievements today." Amongst those achievements were excellent debut marathon runs from Trish Hallowell and Wendy Paulson, and a gutsy performance from Sarah Lunt who battled severe back pain to make it to the finish line, raising funds for the Forget Me Not Trust.

Results (Marathon): Sean Thompson 3:02:15, Amjid Khan 4:07:44, Trish Hallowell 5:01:52, Samantha Varley 5:07:35, Anne-Marie Killeen 5:14:12, Wendy Paulson 5:30:53, Sarah Lunt 5:47:00

Result (10 Mile): Gareth Knight 1:10:14, Stefanie Hopkins 1:11:08, Roy Lunt 1:20:16, Robert Ashcroft 1:21:13, Cat Daniel 1:23:24, John Hirst 1:23:50, Catherine McHugh 1:24:13, Sarah Williams 1:30:06, Claire Alletson 1:30:12, Phil Richards 1:33:56, Allison Hesketh 1:38:51, Caroline Palmer



1:39:25, Louise Sutcliffe 1:40:47, Kelly Richards 1:45:40, Stephanie Hull 1:49:09, Gail Fawcett 1:56:04, Jeanette Campbell 1:59:14, Hazel Woollin 2:13:58, Judith MacDonald 2:15:21

### **Manchester Half Marathon**

Nine Lions braved torrential rain in Manchester to post some impressive times at the city's Half Marathon. The closed-roads route took runners past the Town Hall, over the Bridgewater Canal and the River Mersey and on to the finish line at Old Trafford. Gavin Foster was first Lion home in a new personal best time. He was delighted with his first sub 80-minute half and said, "Not even the rain could dampen my spirits".

Results: Gavin Foster 1:19:45, Chris Hall 1:22:22, Mags Beever 1:24:45, Clayton Cutter 1:33:34, Suzanne Patterson 1:33:50, Amanda Zito 1:41:21, Rebecca Green 1:55:04, Alexandra Hoyle 2:16:52, Michelle Eyre 2:37:37

### **Royal Parks Half Marathon**

Two Lions were among the 16,000 runners at this weekend's Royal Parks Half Marathon, billed as London's most beautiful half marathon. The undulating 13.1-mile route on closed roads took in some of the city's most famous landmarks and four of London's eight Royal Parks - Hyde Park, Green Park, St James's Park and Kensington Gardens.

Results: Anne Cawdron 2:29:53, Peter Cawdron 2:52:10

### **Rombalds Romp Fell Race**

With so many club members off doing the big Manchester and Yorkshire road races on Sunday, numbers were somewhat depleted for the Rombalds Romp. The hardy souls who did the Romp suffered appalling weather up on Ilkley Moor but added to their tally of club championship points as the race was a counter for the competition. Jonny Cartwright was first Lion.

Results: Jonny Cartwright 1:03:46, Paul Hiley 1:07:47, James Penson 1:09:58, James McNutt 1:13:41, Andy Baird 1:14:18, Stuart Clinton 1:17:23, Paul Patrick 1:18:21, Ian Johnson 1:18:55, John Ingles 1:21:45, Jonathan Pybus 1:23:39, Steve Hallam 1:25:10, Aileen Baldwin 1:29:31, Alex Whyte 2:05:40, Jackie Barker 2:10:39



### **Windgatherer Fell Race**

David Culpan was the sole Lion at the Windgatherer Fell Race in Buxton. The 13-mile route with 2,600 feet of climbing passed through the Goyt Valley and over Shining Tor. Weather conditions were atrocious, causing navigational problems for many of the runners, although all 129 participants completed the course eventually. David described it "like running through a river for 13 miles".

Result: David Culpan 2:34:47



### Alder Hey 10K

Paul Shaw pelted round Alder Hey 10K, a scenic run around Croxteth Hall and Country Park in Liverpool, in a very tidy 47:50.

### Trent Valley Sportive

Although running in torrential rain is miserable enough, for maximum wet weather misery what you really need is a bike. Spare a thought then for Sally MacGregor, Kevin Jaggard, John Rushworth and Cameron Rushworth who all tackled the 109 km Trent Valley Sportive on Sunday. No doubt they signed up for it when the temperatures were higher, and the sun was shining, but the reality on the day was hours of cycling in heavy rain and gusting cross-winds followed by many more hours of cleaning their bikes.

**26 October 2018: This weekend the Lions were in Amsterdam to celebrate Coach Mark Pigford's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and to try out the city's marathon and half marathon.**

### Amsterdam Marathon and Half Marathon



Stephen Hall and Leon Severn tackled the full Marathon course. Stephen smashed his sub 2:50 target time to storm round in an outstanding 2:47:57. There were some excellent times posted in the half marathon too, with Anthony Mott leading the Lions home in a new personal best time of 1:31:45.

Results (marathon): Stephen Hall 2:47:57, Leon Severn 3:39:45

Result (half marathon): Anthony Mott 1:31:45, Sally Caton 1:35:41, Mark Pigford 1:37:05, John Bassinder 1:37:25, Julie Field 1:38:53, Lorraine Naylor 1:40:51, Helen Armitage 1:44:01, Aileen Baldwin 1:46:30, Michelle Rogerson 1:46:49, Richard Crombie 1:47:42, Tracy Mott 1:48:50, Tim Neville 1:51:56, Ian Hoskins 1:52:05, Ian Johnson 1:56:35, John Hirst 1:57:09, Karen Thorne 1:58:46, Sharon Marlor-Gage 2:01:05, Ray Mooney 2:03:43, Rikki Hammond 2:05:05, Paul Armitage 2:06:59, Steve Boyer 2:12:17

### St Aidan's Trail Half Marathon

Eight Lions ran the St Aidan's Trail Half Marathon on Saturday. The course starts close to the RSPB visitor centre at St Aidan's Nature Reserve and follows the River Aire for a spin around Fairburn Ings Nature Reserve. Jan King was first Lion home and first M60. Hot on his heels was the rapidly improving Catherine McHugh who finished third in her age category.

Results: Jan King 1:53:21, Catherine McHugh 1:53:59, Tim Walker 1:54:46, Sandy Gee 2:03:18, Paula Pickersgill 2:05:33, Jenny Walker 2:17:58, Zoe Mallinson 2:18:55, Debbie Hyde 2:21:55

### Holmfirth 10K

Matthew Pierson finished fourth at the Holmfirth 10K, a fast road race through the pretty villages of New Mill, Brockholes and Thongsbridge. This was Matthew's first race for some time and he said afterwards, "Next time I'll pick one that's less hilly".

Results: Matthew Pierson 36:22, Gareth Knight 42:50, Paul Corns 47:25

### Beat The Reaper

And lastly, a bit of Halloween fun. Beat the Reaper is a 10K race set within the picturesque grounds of Croxteth Hall and Country Park in Liverpool. The 2-lap course passes through the woods where Grim Reapers lurk ready to race the runners (many of whom dress up in Halloween costumes) to the finish.

Results: Robert Ashcroft 49:45, Mark Sadler 52:33, Paul Shaw 52:41

## Club Championship

### Steve Hallam



**As some of you will know, I will be taking over the Club Championship for 2019, following the remarkable spell under the ownership of Mark Preston, which spans at least 10 years.**

That's quite a hard act to follow, as Mark has diligently and thoughtfully held it all together for so long.

Whilst spreadsheets scare me slightly, I do have a clear enthusiasm for the championship, watching how fellow runners progress and improve their running, whilst engaging in the usual banter associated with it!

I am not planning on radical changes to the format or the types of events to be included. However, there will be a few tweaks:

- Local parkruns. I intend to include Brighouse in addition to Halifax and Huddersfield, with your fastest time from any to count. This ties in nicely with the weekly parkrun report and by having all three together, will simplify your main reason to be get up earlier on a Saturday morning!

- With parkrun then becoming effectively a single event for scoring purposes, I will also include a separate one-off 5K event at some point in the year.

- I believe there are several events that need to stay and be consistent with the recent past. These include a couple of Cross Countries, those linked to local charities such as Overgate and Kirkwood and traditional favourites like Guy Fawkes and Flat Cap etc. To freshen things up, I will include a few events that we haven't had in the Championship before and maybe a couple that we haven't seen for some time.

Whilst I'm happy to hear from fellow members about any race they would like to see included, please bear in mind that they would need to be:

- Easy to enter and not fill up immediately (That's why the Brass Monkey Half Marathon never features!)
- Be accessible for the majority of members
- Ideally, be likely to appeal to most of us

I will ensure that we have a wide range of different events and distances including a few fell races, scenic trail runs and a variety of road races.

As usual, there will still be a Handicap Competition (if I can extract the spreadsheet secrets from Mark and make any sense of it all!)

**IMPORTANT:**

I'm not intending to rely on auto-enrolment, based on runners who have completed at least a couple of Championship events this year, but would rather everyone take the personal decision of whether to opt-in or opt out for 2019.

Ideally, I would like to have a complete list of "opt-ins" by 1st January 2019. Having said that, there's no reason why you can't join up at a later date, but please bear in mind that you will only qualify for championship events from the date that you enter as it would be unfair to others to retrospectively include past results.

So, if you could let me know as soon as possible, that would be great. You can either use the Forum or simply message me on Facebook

In the meantime, here's some great reasons to be involved:

1. Whether you're a fast, medium or steady runner, the key thing is that it can be enormous fun to turn up in large numbers, proudly wearing your Stainland Vest/T Shirt and be part of something special! Simply taking part can give you an enormous feeling of well-being
2. Whilst it's great to win a trophy at the end of the year, it's also good to test yourself against other like-minded runners who will be at a similar level to yourself
3. Most regular championship runners actively encourage their club competitors despite racing against them, which is always a positive thing, whether you come first or last
4. There's a real risk that it may improve your running!
5. Don't be put off by "pressure" to compete. I know that some of you have previously been discouraged by this. Just take the pressure off yourself by simply turning up and having a go - Make it fun, because at the end of the day, that's all it is, for all of us!

I sincerely hope that we can make progress with the Championship next year and maybe increase its popularity. By taking over the reins, I see it as my way of giving something back to a great club, of which I've been a member since 2008

Any questions at all, just give me a shout. Hope to see even more of you at our future events.

When it all gets too much - just keep going!

# Highs and Lows of the Dam!

## Stephen Hall

### Where do I start, what a weekend.

I asked Leon if I could share my experience a few weeks ago as I thought a few folk would like to hear my approach to marathons and how it went, good or bad with a view of learning something.

Amsterdam was sold to me by Mark who said we were all off to Amsterdam to do the Marathon then go out for a good session afterwards. I agreed to it in principle and put it to the back of my mind as I still had London to get out of way. After a hard slog in London, I initially thought that sub 3 hours would be easily achievable and go towards my goal of 10 sub 3-hour marathons.

As time went by it soon became clear that Mark had only managed to trick both Leon and me and even dodged the bullet himself. Nonetheless, July soon came around and after a good summer of hard running, a revised target was made of sub 2.50 and it was time to step up.

I decided that I would train to a similar method as London by blocks (4 weeks @ 50, 4 weeks @ 60, 4 weeks @ 70, 1 @ 75 miles) but this time do my marathon pace at 6.10s (far faster than required). I would also try race where I could and try get leaner/stronger. I also decided to tweak a few other things. I tried not to have protein shakes, only after my long runs and I would only take minimal gels on runs. I would also embark on a new brand as potentially SIS caused my two toilet stops at London. After seeing constant adverts on Facebook, I went with a brand called 33 Shake. This is promoted as all-natural ingredients and only one an hour is required. I thought, why not, what have I got to lose apart from the £19.00 for 10 gels. They come 'dry' so need mixing and end up quite gloopy so hard to take.

After finding my cross training was becoming stagnant, I decided to join snap fitness after 10 years at Calderdale Council gyms. This brought new motivation and I was training with new treadmills and doing two/three exercise classes (boxfit and abs blast) a week. This helped break the mileage up and I was seeing good results.

All was good, my miles and speed were building but at the back of my mind I was conscious about burn out. I've seen many people do so and so far, had always managed to avoid it so took the view that all slow miles needed to be slow and I wasn't to do any more than necessary. In time I decided to drop the classes as doing 70 mile a week was enough and time was becoming sparser.

Another change this time was instead of doing 16 on the canal with 8 at MP I would go full throttle at the Great west coast. I looked at previous results and thought I could place well, the initial plan was to run at 5.50s but after a few miles, I thought this was unachievable so decided to stick to sub 6.00-minute miles on the climbs (not many) and faster where downhill and flat. I had a good race where I managed to win it and come out with a PB but more importantly injury free and a massive boost of confidence. It would all have been in vain if Amsterdam didn't go to plan though, so I had to stay level headed and focus on the task in hand.

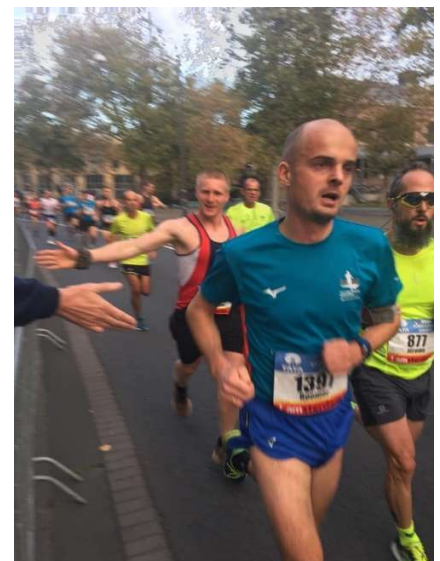
The taper is the most mentally draining part of training but at the same time, the most crucial. In the last week though I had to visit the physio (Jimmy Farrell @ Heath mount) as I feared I had a recurrence of a previous swollen disc. He said that during the race it should warm up and go but would ache afterwards. Later, I found that he would have been spot on. It came and went just as fast then afterwards it ached.

After months of training, it was clear I was fitter and faster than I've felt previously but this marathon would be the first I've done in 3 marathons on my own as usually have my hand held (not literally) before and during by Jamie (Westwood). I'd done near enough all my training on my own so there shouldn't be an issue if I managed my pace right.

Prior to the race I meet up with Leon who despite me wanting to relax near the toilets was anchoring to get to the start line. Like in London, I found somewhere to sit, listen to music lay out my gear so I didn't forget anything: water, sports energy go drink, beet it shot, 4 33 shake gels, bio freeze, Vaseline, ibuprofen gel, rock tape, tiger balm and a black bag.

Onto the race, the target pace for the race was 6.15s so I knew if I achieved this for the majority of race, I would have a few minutes to play with if/when I got tired. Personally, I'm not a fan of believing someone can run a perfect split as we aren't machines and ultimately will tire at some point. The race didn't start too well as I'd managed to lose 15 seconds in the first mile as it was too busy but through experience, for once, it didn't bother me, I knew I'd pull it back if I concentrated. 15 seconds may not sound a lot but when you are potentially chasing a goal where every second counts, it's important to get them back where you can but in the past, I may have tried getting the deficient out of the way in the next mile and burnt out later.

After the first two miles, it was great to see various lions through the park then with my wife at the top by my hotel. After much criticism in the past by a few lions, I tried to make the effort by looking happy. About 2.5 miles, after running through the Rijksmuseum to a pungent smell, I did wonder if this was going to be the norm around the whole course. Luckily, it was the last time I smelt it till the evening's activities (passive 😊). More lions were present on route which was nice as helped break the miles up. I knew that once I got on the canal (3.5 miles out and then back) I could calm myself down and just tick the miles off. The halfway mark came on the canal, so the first part went smoothly (1.23) but I had a few more miles before I needed to implement my plan and then the true race would begin. I said to myself, run another 3 then it's only 10 left. Once I got to 16, it was time for another one of my 'special' gels. I then told myself to squeeze out 2 2's to get to 20 where the race began. The strangest thing to see whilst on route was seeing Julie and her other half Russell about mile 18 in the middle of nowhere.



At 32k (ish) Alison told me to look up and watch a video which was two of my children doing a good luck message which was a nice touch. Ed and Mark had reminded me a few times that Mile 20 is where the race begins and providing a good carb load, it was more mental strength. At 20 I had already begun to slow down but I was still comfortable and didn't really have to dig too deep. So, I had another 2 more 2's to get to 24 (where I saw lions and top of the park). I took the approach of slowing down so as not to blow up but maintain a strong pace. I tried to take another gel as got a stitch but as I was getting it out, I felt a strong sense of nausea so had to put it away. It was at the top of the park where for the first time in the whole race I realised I would get sub 2.50 if I

kept my head together and just keep moving. This was a great feeling and helped motivate me during those last two miles.

Coming down the hill to the stadium saw the crowds getting bigger but with tired legs, I had to concentrate as that is where the tram lines were in the road, one slip and that would be that. For those of you that haven't seen the video on Facebook, the announcer (in a Dutch accent of course) announced 'from Halifax, Stephen Hall' and asked how I found it. That got me all excited and then around the corner, I saw Mark first with his hand out high fiving. The euphoria of that 25 metres is like nothing I have ever felt before in a race. It was truly amazing. Then about 25 metres later whilst running through the stadium I had to pull up and be sick. I had to pull myself together and run the required 200m. I felt great in the last 200m but knew I was potentially only one step away from failure. One foot in front of the other would get me through.



With the emotion of sub 2.50, I remember crouching over the railings about to break down in tears. That was short lived so got my medal and plastic sheet I went to find Alison and the others and must have missed the water, they'd moved so it took about 20 minutes to find her and then it had truly sunk in what I'd managed to achieve when everyone was congratulating me. After medal engraving, a pre-massage shower and massage it was time to cheer the halfers come in. This was fun and helped return the kind support they had shown me. My personal highlight came when the announcer advised the first lady was coming and put the winning banner to only find that it was a man with long hair.

Once everyone was in, we arranged for a 7 o'clock meet in the old/little sailor in the red-light district. Firstly, a 2 mile walk back to hotel and then a quick turnaround before food. Once in the red-light district, it was great to catch up with all the lions and talk about the days experiences all whilst watching the 'ladies of the night' earning their crust. This engaged various giddiness amongst the lions. I had to leave about 10.30 as I'd had enough, and Alison was tired so left all the lions to god only knows what 😊. We didn't fancy the 30 minutes' walk back so got the wild and wonderful bike taxi.



It was an amazing weekend with the best personal support, I've had on a marathon. It was great getting a personal best of 2.47.57 but so glad I got to share it with so many. I would recommend it as a marathon and as I understand, the half is an amazing course.

Marks piece of advice for me once over was, train hard as everyone can run a marathon but not everyone can race one. I agree but here is mine - A marathon is all about training for the worst and hoping for the best on the day. A solid base is required for any marathon so don't leave it till 16 weeks before.

Thank you for reading but if anyone wants any advice/tips, feel free to contact me. I'd like to think after doing 6 marathons, I'm more than experienced to pass my knowledge on.



## A little bit about me Joanne Hirst

**I first came down to Heath to run with the Lions in February 2004, persuaded by my friend & neighbour (Alison Adams) that it was a great running club & also running got rid of any tension. Having four daughters at home the tension comment appealed to me and Thursdays became a great escape.**

Thursday nights were not just a running night but a good way to socialise as well. I spent many a running night in the great company of Judith, Lesley, Marilyn & Co. although on many of the runs I just listened, as I couldn't get my head around how they could run & talk at the same time, it was amazing!!!

One of my most eventful Thursdays was in the early days when running through the Bluebell woods. I fell, not just tripped but did a spectacular fall. Due to the location no one could get to me, so the ambulance people called Calder Valley Rescue. So, a slightly embarrassed middle-aged lady was carried down through the woods by some rather young dishy men!! Well that was one way to end a run.

I would say my greatest achievement with the club was getting John (Johnny Boy) to come down to beginners. For many years I had got 'you're mad running in this weather' or 'running again', whilst he sat and watched his Emmerdale/Corrie and slowly turned in to a couch potato. He finally came down to beginners and has never looked back, well only to see if I'm still running behind him. With us both running, the club became a family affair, my daughters have been brought up on marshalling and travelling to race after race to cheer on their dad.





They have been reluctantly dragged up Trooper Lane on the Bluebell Walk and made many a visit to London to watch John & I run the marathon. But it can't be all that bad as the two youngest, Emma & Sarah, are now members of the club, with Sarah competing in this year's Great North Run.

After being in the club for a couple of years, I decided to join the committee to get more involved with the club, and in 2007 I became the Kit Queen for a few years. I am really a quiet/shy person, so this position pushed me into the centre of the club, getting to know other runners that I had admired from afar. After a few years doing the Kit, I decided I wanted to be a bit more active within the committee and with the club, and when in 2010 the Treasurers position became available, I put myself forward and as they say the rest is history!!

As well as keeping a tight rein on the club's money, I also volunteer to take groups out on the club runs on Mondays & Thursdays. I qualified as a LiRF (Leader in Running Fitness) in April 2011, and I have tried my best, through the years, to encourage the less speedy of the club runners. Although I am not the speediest of runner myself, it's great to see beginners come along, join the club and excel with their running through encouragement from other club members. Reminding them of the time they struggled up those pesky hills, of which they now run up without any hesitation and talking at the same time, quite an achievement.

The encouragement factor also works both ways and I have had plenty thrown my way, be it from Su Manning (my ever faithful CWR partner), the TR24 gang for pushing me out of a tent at 2am and telling me I'll enjoy running in mud & rain, from my daughters when I ran the London marathon and even from the club when I was presented with 'Female Most improved Runner' in 2015.

Although I sometimes I feel I spend a lot of time dealing with club matters, my family are my world. I have four gorgeous daughters (I'm allowed to be biased), who John & I am very proud of, and in September we were made grandparents to an adorable baby girl, Isabelle Ava.

My other reason for running.... I love food!! I enjoy cooking, baking & eating the results. I love to experiment with my baking, and unfortunately the club members have been guinea pigs whenever I have tried out new cupcakes or cookies.

Well that's me in a nutshell, my time with the club so far has been brilliant, I have done things I thought I'd never do & I have met some fantastic people who I hope I can call my friends.

# Run Bike Run

## Richard Hand

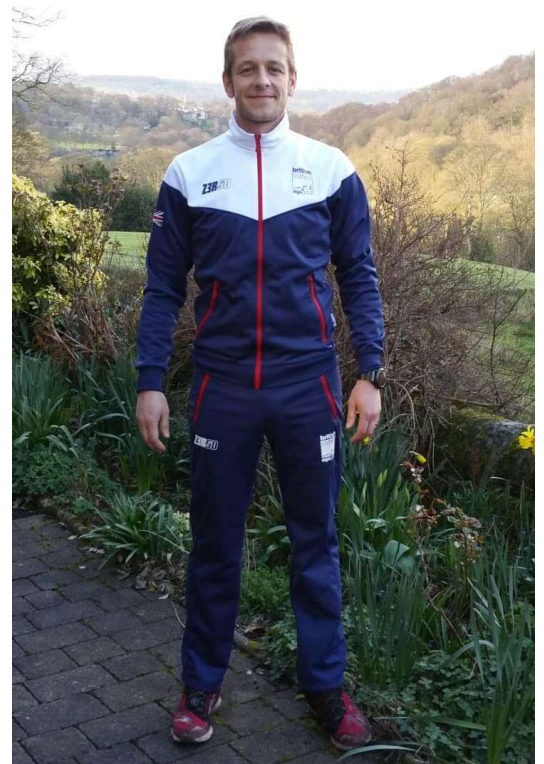
**As some of you probably know at this running club, I tend not to refer to myself much as a 'Runner', but usually as 'Triathlete', 'Duathlete' or just 'Really Indecisive'. You see, I'm also partial to a bit of biking and some occasional swimming.**

I did start out as a 'runner', but about 8 or so years ago after watching the World Triathlon Series on TV, I decided to enter my first Triathlon. After just one race, I was absolutely hooked. I loved the kit, I loved the variety, and most of all I loved the challenge of trying to balance training for more than one sport at the same time.

Although I did reasonably well at Tri, having only started swimming at 30 and with so much technique involved, I found I could never be quite as competitive as I wanted to be. My races would usually unfold the same way: Exit the water way down on the leaders and smash the bike and run as hard as I could to limit the damage. I realised quickly that to make serious inroads to the podium, I'd have to commit to swimming in a big way, and to be totally honest, with a young family and busy full-time job, that was always going to be a challenge. Don't get me wrong, I love to swim, but for me, the biggest difficulty is that the council set the pool schedule, and it rarely matches my own availability. Running and Biking don't work like that; So long as you can put up with weather, you can pretty much go straight out of your front door whenever you want (Although more frequently these days I'm found sweating away in the garage rather than training outdoors!)

With limited time in the water, it wasn't long before I started to dabble with Duathlon, which for those who don't know is a run-bike-run format of a Triathlon which usually appears on the calendar early and late season when the open water venues are too cold to swim in.

I absolutely loved Duathlon from the off, and with a swim swapped for a run, I found that I was suddenly competitive, and even managed to grab the odd podium spot. After a couple of decent results, I started to consider whether I could make the GB Age Group Team. Triathlon as a sport is unusual in that as well as the 'Elite' Category (think The Brownlees), the sport also offers a chance of national representation for good amateurs in their respective Age Groups. The rules are simple; Enter any one (or all) of the qualifying races and



finish top 4 in your age category and you'll automatically qualify. There are then a few 'roll down' places for the fastest finisher who didn't make top 4. I've been very lucky to have qualified and pulled on the GB Tri Suit both at the World Championships in Pontevedra (Spain) in 2014 and the European Championship in Kalkar (Germany) 2016. Although I didn't have a great race in Spain (I punctured on my bike and ended up finishing 50th), Germany was a little more fruitful and I managed to finish 9th.

Unfortunately, my Triathlon journey hasn't only been an upward trajectory. After the highs of racing for Team GB in Germany, my non-Triathlon life started to take over. I was already fatigued from training and racing and needed a break, but it also coincided with moving to a new house and started a huge renovation project (still going on!) and changing jobs. Before I knew it, my 'recovery' period had lasted almost a year, and I had fallen into some bad eating and drinking habits. I was untrained, unmotivated and I'd gained more than a stone.

I made a few attempts at getting back to fitness, but without a focus, and with a lot still going on in my real life, I kept repeating the same mistake; I would train like a crazy for a few weeks just seeking rapid improvements, then completely disintegrate with fatigue from going too hard too soon and would stop training again. I did attempt a few races here and there, but the results were usually disappointing. I will never forget the disappointment of finishing 58th place at the opening race of XC, having finished 6th on the same course not even a year before! With each poor result, my confidence took a beating and the cycle of boom and bust training would repeat.

After another 12 months, the building work at home eased off and so did the pressure I was putting on myself. I started this year with a little more training consistency and tried to find enjoyment from training and racing again. My running was still hit and miss but I started to focus more on my biking and entered some Cycling Time Trials. Having had little prior experience in bike only events, I had no expectations of myself which allowed me to enjoy the experience and learn. I managed to set some new PBs across 10m, 15m, 25m, 30m and 50m distances. My confidence was starting to come back, and things were heading generally in the right direction.

On holiday in August, and whilst lying on a sun lounger sipping an afternoon beer (how most of my best decisions are made), I realised that in 2019, I would have a significant birthday, which would move me up to the 40-44 age cat (in Triathlon, your age group is your age at the end of the current year). I then started to wonder if I could make the GB age Group Team again. I had a look at the British Triathlon website and spotted that there was one Standard Distance qualifying race left at Oulton Park in 30th September. I entered there and then.

With just over 8 weeks until race day, I knew I needed to make the best possible use of my time to make the gains necessary to qualify. I didn't feel confident in writing my own plan, so I signed up for 'TrainingPeaks' a mobile training app and downloaded an advanced Duathlon Training Plan. As Coach Pigford will testify, having written Marathon plans for me in the past, I've not always been the best at following the instructions in front of me. I have a bad habit of getting carried away and trying to make the easy sessions much harder than they should be. It's not big or clever and often it's resulted in underachievement, but this time I was determined that I would put my faith entirely into the plan and follow it to the best of my abilities. The plan itself required commitment of about 10 hours a week of training, which was often a lower intensity than I'm used to, but with several key sessions designed to build power, speed and stamina on both the bike and run. The plan works on 4-week periodisation cycles, which means 3 weeks of 'building' followed by a 4th week of active recovery to allow your body to adapt and improve.

The beauty of the TrainingPeaks App is that although I was using a prescribed training plan, it allows you to move around sessions and alter as you see fit, so the biggest benefit for me was time management. By moving sessions around to match my schedule, I was able to commit to the sessions without life throwing a spanner,

for example Tuesday is football for my boys, so I would do a shortened session in the morning before work, so I was free in the evening. It also allowed me to swap a couple of sessions for races which I had in my mind.

The first week on the plan was extremely tough. Even though the sessions were perhaps easier than I'm used to, the volume was high, and my body was screaming out for rest. Slowly I started to adapt, and by week 3 I was feeling much stronger and was now about 4lbs lighter. That week I ran the Yorkshireman Half Marathon. I ran a pretty solid race to mile 10 before fading badly, but I wasn't concerned, because I knew I'd come into the race after a full training week and hadn't yet built up the endurance for a long race.

I stuck with the plan for the next 4 weeks dropping a little more weight and gaining a lot more fitness until my final 'B' race, which was to be the Holcombe Mountain Trial Duathlon. This race is a lovely local race organised by John Raho at Holcombe Harriers. The race is essentially two 7.4km fell runs a hilly 27k road bike in-between. After a punishing race, I was amazed to reach the podium in 3rd place behind to two legends of the fells - Karl Gray and Danny Hope and I also won a prize for the fastest bike spilt of the day. This was my best finish in nearly 3 years! Things were looking up ahead of my qualification race a week later....



As you may know, Oulton Park is motor racing circuit, so the course is completely closed to traffic, which makes for a very fast course. The race was 2 laps (8.6k) run, 9 laps bike (38.8k) and 1 lap run (4.3k). With so many men battling for qualification, the pace was furious right from the starting pistol. Even with what seemed like a conservative start compared to my opponents, my first mile was ticked off in 5min 20 secs! I knew if I tried to stick with that pace, I would blow up before the end of the first run, so I fought the urge to keep up and eased off significantly to complete the rest of the run with a more even pacing. I came into Transition in 32:39 with a bit left in the tank. Going well so far.

After a reasonably quick transition, I mounted my bike and proceeded to pedal (and count!) my way through the 9-lap course. With long, smooth, banked corners, there was little need for braking, which meant a full hour pushing on the pedals and little recovery. Pacing would be key, so I concentrated on a smooth pedal stroke and I was only really starting to hurt on the last couple of laps. I was flying past people and I eventually arrived into transition with a bike split of 59:16 and an average speed of more than 24mph. Now there was just a short run to complete!

Considering how hard I'd worked on the bike, I was worried I would blow up quickly on the run, but as soon as I left transition, but I felt good. I settled into an even pace and just tried to hold on. I lost a few places and could feel cramp creeping into my hamstrings, but I knew I could finish well. I finally finished this run in 16:39, which gave me an overall time of 1:50:49 and 19th place, but most importantly, I was the first man in the 40-44 age group, which meant **I'd automatically qualified for the European Duathlon Championship in Romania in July 2019!**

I've been alive nearly 4 decades and there is a temptation to think I know all there is useful to know, but truly the last couple of years have taught me a lot. There's absolutely nothing new below, and it applies to most aspect of live not just sport, but sometimes it's good to be reminded....

- Set realistic (but challenging) goals. With hard work, determination and sacrifice, you can succeed.
- There are no quick wins! The more challenging the goal, the longer it will take you to get there, so buckle up for the long haul.
- Don't try to do it all on your own - Take the advice of the experts. I've been too guilty in the past of thinking I know what's best for me (I don't). We have some excellent coaches at the club. Listen to them and **do** what they tell you.
- Make sure those around you support your goals too. I'm very fortunate to have a very understanding and supportive family. If your loved ones aren't bought in, you will struggle, so make sure they're up for it too.

And finally, the goal for 2019? A medal of course!

