



John Bassinder

From The Chair

A bit of rambling from our Chair, with a lowdown of what's been happening during November 2023

Debbie Grunhut-Hinds

Race Reports

A summary of race reports from November 2023

Various

Contributors

Maria - Ladies Update; Steve - Club Championship; Coaching with Colin; JP - Away Runs; In the Lion's Den with Gav.

From the Chair

John Bassinder



Christmas is coming, ready or not, followed early in the New Year by the AGM [15th January] and the end of my spell in the Chair. One of the tasks I'll be handing on to Paul will be this newsletter ramble. Like me Paul's been in the chair before and we both know that some of the Chair's duties can be a bit of a chore, but writing this has always been easy. That's simply because the starting point for any writing is finding inspiration, and in this club finding inspiration is never a problem! At Huddersfield Parkrun a few weeks ago Bernadette set a new F85 record. Yes, that's right, 85 years old, still running, no big fuss just another day for a modest lady who keeps on running. Talking of keeping on running - I was chatting to Alex at the Bronte Way fell race, just another day for her as well, another day that is in her now 1,100 continuous days of running in which she has clocked up over 5,000 miles and over 427,000 ft of climb, again no fuss, just goes out and does it. Super-vet Dick Spendlove finished Tatton Park half marathon as 1st M75 in 1:52:10 and all being well that will have qualified him to run for England in next year's Manchester Half Marathon. Also completing Tatton was Kate Wilson. Any non-runner going from couch to 5K should be proud of themselves but after joining our beginners' course last May Kate went from couch to half marathon in just six months and is now looking ahead to her first full Marathon – that's taking it to another level Kate, well done! The same weekend Roy Lunt went well beyond a marathon and ran 55 miles in 24 hours, hopefully more from Roy, Dick and Kate in their own words below. Still want inspiration; chat to Carol Heptonstall, back Park running and enjoying a 5 miler with friends recently, having been told by specialists this time last year that she would never run again following her fall and quite horrific knee injury and extensive repair work. [Don't ask her the details of the knee damage, I did and still cringe].

Whether it's following the antics of any of the above or seeing our speedies such as Mags and Jamie Westwood having their focus and determination rewarded with England vests or the likes of Chris Hall and Gav Foster with their hard work certainly paying off in fantastic results, you'll find no shortage of inspirational Lions who just set themselves targets and quietly get on with it. Incidentally, how many people know that while President Colin may be running less these days the determination that saw him achieve many feats in the past with his running shoes on [52 mile CW in 11 hrs and so on] is still plain to see in his two wheeled challenges. In July he followed up last year's LEJoG bike ride with a 600 mile ride around the west coast of Ireland and is regularly clocking up 60 – 80 mile rides.

So if it's inspiration you're looking for don't waste time searching the media for it just look to your fellow Lions, there are some amazing people in our club.

Like everything in life though, the success of this club needs inspiration plus hard work and I've said many times that a club can't function without a team behind the scenes doing that hard work. I'm really grateful for the people who have volunteered to stay on next year in vital roles such as Debbie who has put together this newsletter among her many other tasks [Press, Parkrun reports, away runs along with JP] Paula as Kit Queen, our IT team Mark Pottinger and Andrew Falkingbridge and of course Steve H organising [and reorganising] our Championship. Once again Steve has spent a lot of time and effort, as he does every year, looking for new ideas to keep the Championship fresh and all inclusive. Have to say, it will need significant reorganising before I ever win it again, but hey, very pleased to have been there, done that, and I'd absolutely encourage everyone to have a go while you can - Once your name is on those trophies nobody can take it away.

Talking of trophies leads me nicely on to presentation night, by now everyone should be aware of the change of format this time so make sure you get your places booked for Friday February 9th at the Bradley Hall Golf club. Also this would

seem an ideal opportunity to start appealing for last year's silverware to be returned for re-engraving so if you have a trophy from last year could you please return it to Colin or any committee member, thanks.

Cross Country season kicked off in style at Baildon. Success for our ladies and Super-vets team both finishing in first place. Success for me just to get round with taped toes two weeks after my rock kicking fall and sprawl at Soyland Moor fell race. Finished way down but finished in one piece so that'll do, genuinely thought I'd be out for ages after that dive so very pleased to be back so soon. I'm adjudicating and refereeing loads of races over the next few months, including the WYWL events and next week's 'Bah Humbug' so I didn't relish the thought of having to turn up just to watch and not be able to run, we've all been there and know how frustrating that is.

As I said at the start, Christmas is coming fast . . . and so is our tree run. Thursday 14th December from the New Inn at Sowood, running, singing, eating, drinking, preferably not all at the same time – See the FB post for full details. Christmas for us is all about Boxing Day of course and Cat is working hard yet again to pull everything together. Cat welcomes anyone willing to commit to helping on the day but it may help relieve her festive stress levels if people can please let her know as soon as possible that you intend to be there so she can plan ahead.

As it's my last letter before Christmas I want to wish all of you the happiest of times, but I absolutely can't sign off without this sad footnote - Most people will know that Aileen lost Francis her husband of many years a few weeks ago. Lots of us have happy memories of Francis before his long illness, always at races supporting Aileen and all of us Lions, a willing volunteer at our own races joining in marshaling or wherever needed and one of the most genuine people you could ever wish to meet. I know all our thoughts are with Aileen.

John B.



2023 Championship Races:

- Saturday 28th December – Ambles Revenge, Waggon & Horses, Oxspring.

2023 Fell Championship Races:

- Saturday 9th December – Moors the Merrier (21.1 miles)

West Yorkshire Winter League 2023/24:

- ~~3rd December: Queensbury~~ - CANCELLED
- 17th December: Bramley
- 7th January: Stadium
- 21st January: Lakers
- 18th February: Pudsey (**Note: date has been changed from the 11th Feb**).
- 25th February: Stainland
- 10th March: Crossgates

Club Events:

- Sunday 10th December 2023: Children's Christmas Party @ Heath (3pm – 5pm).
- Thursday 14th December 2023: Christmas Tree Away Run from the New Inn, Sowood.
- Friday 15th December 2023: Lions Christmas Meal, Syhiba, Sowerby Bridge.
- Tuesday 26th December 2023: Boxing Day Fun Run.
- Sunday 14th January 2024: Stainland Winter Handicap
- Monday 15th January 2024: Stainland Lions AGM, Heath Rugby Club
- Friday 9th February 2024: Stainland Lions Presentation Night & Party, Bradley Hall Golf Club.
- February 25th 2024 – Stainland hosting WYWL Cross Country.
- May 5th 2024 – Bluebell Trail.

Lions Publicity Officer

Debbie Grunhut-Hinds



Race Report for November 2023



Shepherds Skyline Fell Race (4th Nov):

This category 'BS' race has 350m of ascent over the 10km course. Starting and finishing near the Race HQ at the Shepherds Rest Inn, Todmorden, the course is fast and muddy, taking runners on a steep descent off Stoodley Pike, immediately followed by a stiff climb back up. This was James Penson's first fell race of the weekend, he finished in 61:37 with fellow teammate Clare Smith in 68:25 & taking 3rd F45 place.

James Penson at Shepherds Skyline
(Pic by: Stuart Wolstenholme)

Guy Fawkes 10 (5th Nov):

The race was a counter event in the Club's Championship. The challenging and hilly 10-mile road race in Nidderdale covers a mixture of bridleways and roads, starting and finishing in the stunning grounds of Ripley Castle; a hugely popular race with over 800 runners taking part – 34 of which were Lions. Gavin Foster led the Lions home in 11th place with a course PB time of 1:02:12, knocking 28 seconds off his previous time and taking 3rd place in the M35 category. Helen Armitage was the first Lioness back and securing 1st F55. There were also PB times for Ray Mooney (1:25:51) by 2 mins 59 seconds, Wendy Goodwin (1:45:19) by 18 seconds, and Phil Richards (1:49:48) by 1 min 7 seconds. With just two championship races left this season, there is still everything to play for.

Results: Gavin Foster 1:02:12, Sean Thompson 1:15:28, Daniel Sykes 1:16:08, Paul Corns 1:17:35, Steve Hallam 1:19:42, Helen Armitage 1:21:45, Clayton Cutter 1:22:44, Sally Caton 1:22:47, Paul Brough 1:24:11, Michelle Rogerson 1:24:49, Ray Mooney 1:25:51, Amanda Zito 1:27:46, Laura Goodwin 1:30:00, Joanne Kitcher 1:30:34, Rebecca Gvozdenko 1:30:39, John Carless 1:31:14, Gail Schofield 1:31:36, Rikki Hammond 1:33:02, Sandy Gee 1:33:21, Hayley Kelly 1:37:53, Paul Butterfield 1:42:12, Heather Anderson 1:43:20, Claire Haigh 1:45:36, Wendy Goodwin 1:45:19, Phil Richards 1:49:48, Carol Lord 1:55:17, Lesley Henderson 1:57:13, Peter Cawdron 1:57:57, Paul Armitage 1:58:20, Sue Shepherd 2:06:48, Alison Bamford 2:06:56, Jackie Barker 2:09:13, Anne Cawdron 2:16:22, Alan Gibson 2:20:00.



Guy Fawkes 10 Championship Race

Cop Hill Fell Race (5th Nov):

For his second fell race of the weekend, James Penson tackled the Cop Hill Fell race, finishing in a time of 54:54, along with Dick Spendlove who took 1st in the M75 category with a time of 1:01:06. This race has runnable climbs, fields and trails and is the only race that allows access to Meltham’s iconic Cop Hill, with a descent that runners will remember – twice!

Soyland Moor Fell Race (5th Nov):

This 13.5 mile fell race had 1300 feet of ascent and is described as “visiting the worst and best that Calderdale has to offer!” The race starts with a steep tarmac uphill from the Hinchcliffe Arms towards the delightful bogs of Sunderland Pasture and onwards to Stoodley Pike; runners then head over the moor, along the Pennine Way and over Cragg Vale Road before following the route back to the pub. Each checkpoint enroute must be visited in the correct order.



Results: Andrew Earnshaw 2:07:21, Paul Patrick 2:22:20, Martin O’Brien 2:27:39 & John Bassinder 2:38:14.

New York Marathon (5th Nov):

Richard Crombie took on the biggest marathon in the world, spanning five boroughs, with more than 50,000 people competing. The race begins on Staten Island and exits the Island via Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge before taking runners through Brooklyn and into Queens and entering Manhattan. After a trip into the Bronx, runners head back down into Manhattan and into Central Park and the finish line. Richard finished in a time of 3:47:20.

Escape from Meriden (18th Nov):

Roy Lunt took part in the Escape from Meriden Race, where runners had 24 hours to get as far away from the start as possible. There was a catch however . . . the distance is measured “as the crow flies” so not only was it a test of endurance but also one of navigation skills. Roy managed a massive 55 miles in 16 hours. **[Roy tells us the full story further on].**

Clowne Half Marathon (19th Nov):

Twelve Lions ran the Clowne Half Marathon, a counter in this year's Club's Championship. The course is an undulating one, starting from Clowne centre and heading through the surrounding villages before returning to Clowne. £1 from every race entry went to Raise the Roof for Ruth. Gavin Foster led the Lions home in 5th place with a course PB time of 1:19:47, knocking 8 seconds off and finishing 1st M35. John Carless ran his fastest half marathon time of 1:56:14, taking 2 mins 46 seconds off his previous best.

Results: Gavin Foster 1:19:47, Helen Armitage 1:45:41 (2nd F55), Michelle Rogerson 1:51:36, John Carless 1:56:14, Joanne Kitcher 1:57:19, Hayley Kelly 2:04:20, Paul Butterfield 2:07:38, Maria Chandler 2:08:03, Paula Pickersgill 2:09:25, Sandy Gee 2:09:25, Alex Whyte 2:21:01, Trish Hallowell 2:40:46.

Tadcaster 10 Mile (19th Nov):

Two Lions took part in the Tadcaster 10, a ten mile loop on fully closed roads around Tadcaster, taking in the villages of Catterton, Healaugh and Wighill. All finishers received a custom Tad 10 medal and some tasty treats. Paul Corns ran in 1:14:00 and Gail Schofield in 1:25:33.

Run Tatton Half Marathon (19th Nov):

Kate Wilson chose Run Tatton to tackle her first Half Marathon only six months after joining the Lions, and clocked up a time of 2:18:25, she was joined by fellow Lion Richard Spendlove who was the first V75 home with a time of 1:52:10.

West Yorkshire Winter League – Race 1: Baildon (19th Nov):

Sunday saw the first race in the hugely popular West Yorkshire Winter League Cross Country Series. 33 Lions took part in the 5 mile race which is run entirely on tracks over a muddy Baildon Moor. Mags Beever was 3rd lady followed by Danielle Hirst, Stefanie Hopkins, Anne Johnson and Captain Lorraine Naylor all getting the points in for the ladies. Mark Pottinger was first man home for the Lions, followed by Neil Bee, Bill Johnson and Dan Marsden. Other point scorers for the men were Daniel Sykes, James Penson and Andrew Earnshaw, who clearly thrives on this terrain. Thanks to Baildon for making it happen – a great day out and a lovely social event. The next race is hosted by Queensbury in two weeks' time.



PB Corner

Parkrun PB's

November 11th :

Brighouse: **Karen Carless** bagged another PB of 23:42, taking 16 seconds off and clocking up her fastest Parkrun time.

Sarah Wannerton also clocked up a PB of 28:44, knocking 6 mins 8 seconds off her 2019 course time.

Alexander: **Paul Corns** knocked 14 seconds off his previous time, giving him a PB of 20:44.

Gail Schofield also ran a PB time of 25:11, taking 42 seconds off.

Holkham, Norfolk: **Tim Walker** ran a PB time of 24:27, taking 25 seconds off his previous time.

November 18th :

Huddersfield: **Wayne Underwood** took 18 seconds off his course time, giving him a PB of 27:17.

Sarah Wannerton came in at 27:29 and knocking 57 seconds off her course time.

Oldham: **Ben Golding-Smith** ran his 200th Parkrun in a time of 24:27.

November 25th :

Halifax: **Claire Haigh** ran a course PB of 27:56 taking 45 seconds off her previous time and getting to her 25th Parkrun milestone.

Alan Whiteley clocked up his 100th Parkrun with a time of 29:46.

Letchworth: **Heather Anderson** clocked up a PB of 29:36, taking 30 seconds off her previous time.

Skipton: **Bill Lee** ran his 100th Parkrun in 29:48.

Selby: **John Carless** ran his fastest Parkrun time of 23:27.

Bracknell: **John Bassinder** ran his 25th Parkrun in 26:36, along with Grandson Isaac who ran a PB time of 26:36 knocking a massive 4 mins 25 seconds off his previous best.

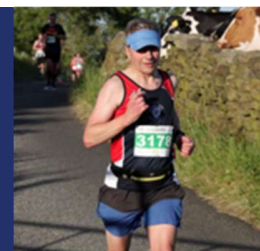
Other PB's

Huddersfield Parkrun (4th Nov): Lions legend Bernadette Rowland smashed the VW85-89 record at Huddersfield Parkrun with a time of 48:30, knocking 1 min 50 seconds off the current record and creating a new F85 5k Stainland Lions Club Record.

Guy Fawkes 10 (5th Nov): Gavin Foster (1:02:12) knocked 28 seconds off his course time. Ray Mooney (1:25:51) by 2 mins 59 seconds, Wendy Goodwin (1:45:19) by 18 seconds, and Phil Richards (1:49:48) by 1 min 7 seconds.

Clowne Half Marathon (19th Nov): Gavin Foster (1:19:47) knocking 8 seconds off his course time. John Carless (1:56:14) ran his fastest half marathon by 2 mins 46 seconds.

Championship Update - Steve Hallam



Championship Update – November 2023

As we now approach the end of the year with only Ambles Revenge and a handful of Parkruns to go, here is a list of events for 2024!

Stainland Lions Championship Races 2024

Event	Distance	Terrain	Profile	Date	Link Entry
Winter Handicap	TBC	TBC	TBC	14th Jan	
Meltham 10K	10K	Road	Hilly	28th Jan	https://bookitzone.com/andy_whitworth/TbjFFX
Hot Toddy	10K	Road	Hilly	3rd Mar	https://www.todharriers.co.uk/hot-toddy-road-race/
Willow Valley Flyer	7.5M	Multi terrain	Undulating	28th Apr	https://racebest.com/races/tv4vy
Blackstone Edge	3.5M	Fell	Hilly	22nd May	https://www.sientries.co.uk/event.php?elid=Y&event_id=12402
The Full Bronte (Bronte 5)	5M	Road	Hilly	May/June	https://www.kcac.co.uk/club-races/bronte-5/
Norman Cole Penistone 10K	10K	Road	Undulating	23rd June	https://racebest.com/races/6secg
Stoodley Pike	3M	Fell	Hilly	2nd July	https://www.fellrunner.org.uk/races/f534e965-a6d6-4997-be85-26f8b7453699
Eccup 10	10M	Road	Undulating	7th July	https://racebest.com/races/arqqk
Hepworth Trail Race	5M	Trail	Hilly	17th July	https://www.summerwinetrails.co.uk/events/the-hepworth-trail/
Hopwood Trot	5M	Multi terrain	Rolling	7th Aug	https://middletonharriers.uk/the-hopwood-trot/
Piethorne 10K	10K	Fell/Trail	Hilly	18th Aug	https://www.fellrunner.org.uk/races/cd96fcf1-b388-4a9f-802c-cb2b56efa942
Meanwood Valley Trail Race	7M	Trail	Undulating	Sept	https://www.valleystriders.org.uk/our-races/meanwood-valley-trail-race/
Holmfirth 10K	10K	Road	Hilly	October	https://www.holmfirthharriers.com/event/holmfirth-10k/
Macclesfield HM	HM	Road	Undulating	27th October	https://www.macclesfieldrunningfestival.com/
Guy Fawkes 10	10M	Road	Hilly	3rd November	https://niddvalleyroadrunners.co.uk/quv-fawkes-10/
Coley Canter	7.5M	Trail	Undulating	December	
Halifax parkrun	5K	Multi terrain	Undulating	Every Saturday	
Huddersfield/Brighouse parkrun	5K	90% tarmac	Rolling	Every Saturday	
3K Track Race	3K	Track	Flat	TBC	

I've reduced the total number from 24 to 20, which should still provide more than enough opportunities to complete at least 9 events to qualify for a potential trophy position.

Following the recent online poll regarding the scoring system, the majority voted to change it to the alternative I proposed, so this will be adopted for the next 12 months at least. So, as a reminder: You will be awarded 20 points for "turning up" plus an additional point for everyone that you beat in each race in your division. Let's see how this goes and if necessary we can change or adjust again for 2025.

As in previous years, the divisions will be created after the first 3 main events have been completed.

Still looking at an age-graded league which will run separately from the main competition and is likely to include both male and female categories.

Catch up soon,
Steve

Ladies Captain's Update - Maria Harron



We are approaching the end of the year again, so many achievements and stories to tell throughout the year. I have asked three ladies to write for the Newsletter this month who have all got a great running story to tell, all very different but all very determined to achieve.

Before I pass over to these three ladies I would like to mention another lady who has been pointed out to me for her hard work

Lin Devine

Lin has recently clocked 1000 miles of running this year, well ahead of her target for completing it at the end of the year. Well done, a great achievement!



Kate Wilson

2023 has been a very good year for me so far. Not only have I lost 9 stone in weight – starting the year at nearly 20 stone, but I have a newfound love of running. A hobby I never thought I would participate in, and a new hobby that I think has quite literally saved my life by improving my health. I joined the Couch to 5k and Beyond course in May and I haven't looked back since.

When I started running, I had no base fitness at all and was still carrying extra weight, but I knew I had to start somewhere and when I saw an advert in the “Go Local” magazine I knew it was time to get out of my comfort zone and give it a go. My thought was that joining a club would keep me accountable on my new fitness journey. And it has! I so very nearly did a ‘runner’ after parking up in the car park for that very first session with Stainland Lions, but I am so glad I didn’t.

I was very slow to begin with and plodded on at the back of the pack but after only a few weeks of regular running with leader Richard I was finding my speed increasing in line with my fitness. And wow it felt good.

It was lovely to chat to other members and hear their stories, advice, and race tips. It genuinely kept me interested. We had some lovely summer runs lead by Richard and Debbie, a personal favourite of mine was the Norland Moorland, it’s so beautiful up there. We saw some lovely sunsets over our beautiful county and I discovered some fab routes I wouldn’t have known about if running alone. We also encountered the odd curious cow! I love the non-competitive element of running in a group and felt like everyone was very encouraging even when I let out a few naughty swear words doing my first few hill runs.

I needed a goal to keep me going so I picked Leeds Marathon in May 2024 to aim for after talking to a fellow Lion who smashed the first one this year. We are a big rugby league family and this one seemed the perfect fit as it is in honour of Leeds legend Rob Burrow. To me this is a bucket list, probably once in a lifetime attempt at something I have always wanted to do. I have long admired anyone who has managed a marathon and although starting from no experience at all, I knew if I had a year to train it might just be within reach.



As part of my training, I booked the Run Tatton Half Marathon to ensure I kept on track with Winter training. I ran this race – my first half on Sunday 19th November. This was exactly 6 months on from lacing up my trainers for the very first time in May, and what a race it was. It rained the whole time and by rain, I mean big fat soggy rain and the puddles at points were calf height, but the atmosphere was great and the course was mercifully flat. My time was 2:18 which is to be improved but as with most races I think there was an element of human traffic to contend with. Learning how to pace by myself without a run leader is still something I am working on. I wore my Lions shirt with pride and was pleased to see

another Lion also taking part and wishing me well on the start line. Apart from the car getting stuck in the mud in the car park the race was a great success.

I now need to advance past any distance longer than a half. So, I aim to do 24km by the first week of December and I have some running paraphernalia on my Christmas list to help keep me motivated. My overall goal and dream is to run an Ultra. Who knows, anything is possible if you put the time, effort and training in. Watch this space!

Carol Ann Heptonstall

Maria asked me if she could use my update in this Newsletter to celebrate that I'm being back to running after that accident, just 12 months ago. To be honest I was unsure, not wanting to be irritating with another update! But then a few people told me they had found that my story had, and was, helping to motivate them in their own recovery and that I should give an update.

So here goes . . .

Sunday 12/11/2023 was a great day, I feel ecstatic, fortunate, lucky and the rest.

Being runners, you know how devastating it can be to hear the words 'you will probably never run again'. Well, I heard those words 12 months ago when, as you may know, I slipped on wet leaves while out for a run and tore tendons in my left knee quadriceps muscle and tendons. This instantly left me unable to walk. I had a 3.5 hour surgery to repair it and was told to expect a 2-year recovery. Ten months, 10 days later I was discharged by an astounded orthopaedic team.

I'd been so determined and committed to my recovery, lets face it I had nothing else to focus on and was not prepared to give up running without a fight.



As you may know my background is nursing but now, I have my own practice as a clinical hypnotherapist, mindfulness teacher and wellbeing life coach, and I became my own client! (hypnotherapyandmindfulnesssolutions.co.uk)

I used hypnotherapy and mindfulness as part of my recovery. Yes, I had my dark days, choosing not to stay stuck in that dark place I used many self-help techniques to help me move forward in my mind. I'm convinced that being able to actively work on my own mental health during my recovery had a significant part to play in my progress.

When I turned into the car park on that morning, I felt overwhelmed and quite emotional to be met by so many people, some new faces to me, who had turned up to share the celebration run with me. Yes, my recovery has been a physical process, but I have also learned a lot about myself, developed mental resilience and a more positive mindset, fueling determination that drove my recovery. So whatever is happening to you, while a positive thought can't change what's happening, I found it can change how you feel giving you the ability to draw on your inner strength and move forward step by step . . . sometimes literally.

So, this is me signing off, and thanking each and every one of you for your support, care, messages and words of encouragement that have enabled me to say

"I'm going for a run just because I can!"

Cross Country Muddy Madness – Beverley Day

In a moment of possible madness, I signed up to take part in the West Yorkshire Winter League. For a few years fellow Lions have been trying to persuade me to take part and for several reasons I never signed up. This is the year I finally took the plunge and on 19th November I ran my first cross country race since I left school!

As a teenager I ran even more than I do now and regularly represented my school and Calderdale at cross country. Those of you who know me and have run regularly with me will know how much I prefer the mud of off-road running and because of this it should come as no surprise how much I enjoyed running in the mud of Baildon. There was a little trepidation as I walked to the start in readiness for my first race of any kind since I ran the Wilmslow Half in March. Once I started running I wondered what all the nervousness was about. I got round the course in one piece and even managed to stay upright! Quite an achievement in that mud.



What I had forgotten was the exhilaration of being out on the moors and slipping and sliding through the mud while racing with others. Even though I am not quite back to pre-injury fitness I absolutely loved struggling up the hills and will be back for more next time. Maybe, my moment of madness wasn't so mad after all! I would recommend signing up next year to all those who have never done it before.

Men's Report

Escape from Meriden 2023 – Roy Lunt

Where to start? . . . Or more to the point – where to finish??!!



Meriden – the traditional centre of England.

It's approaching midnight on a cold, rainy Friday night in November and I'm stood on a village green wondering, once again, "what have I got myself into this time?"

The village in question is Meriden, some seven miles west of Coventry, and nearby stands an eerie looking, centuries old, stone cross that is regarded as being the dead centre of England and the starting point of the race.

So, what is Escape from Meriden?

Quite simply, it's a 24-hour race to get as far away from Meriden as possible.

Now, the twist – you start at midnight, there is no set route, there are no checkpoints, you can be self-sufficient or have a support crew, and you must only travel on foot. Your distance will be measured 'as the crow flies'. Lastly, there is no finish line, other than wherever and whenever you decide to stop.

People that know me will know that this is exactly the kind of ridiculous scenario that draws me in.

So, how do you train for a race with no set route or distance? Not something I considered when we entered this a year ago. I say we, as my usual partners in crime, Sarah and Karen, also entered but for various reasons were unable to take part.

As usual it was a case of enter first think later. This is one of those events that just seems to draw people in – it has a limit of 250 (this is roughly the amount of people that can fit in the church where the event briefing takes place) and, without fail, it sells out every year in around 15 minutes. So, you don't have too long to think about it!!

Having entered, it was time to come up with a plan.

The Route

I suppose the natural instinct with something like this is that you head towards home, and that was my first thought. My mind changed quite quickly when I realised that at some point I would hit the Peak District. Obviously, I was never going to come up with a completely flat route but getting to the Peak District at around 50 miles would have taken its toll.

Instead, I looked north-west, specifically Manchester, my birthplace, and thought it would be a good incentive to try and reach there. This would have been around 90 miles and a massive challenge for me, given that I hadn't done more than 50 miles before. I looked back along the route for a more realistic target, and eventually settled on Macclesfield at around 70 miles. It was important to try and keep the route as straight as possible because, as mentioned earlier, we would be measured 'as the crow flies'. Logistically it was never really going to be an option to recce the route with Meriden being around 130 miles away, so I was reliant on Google Maps and Street View and just had to hope it would work out ok. So that was the route sorted. Or so I thought, until around 3 weeks before the event when Sarah and Karen decided that they might want to give it a go after all . . . and then promptly came up with a different route to mine!! I initially stuck to my route, but ultimately my overriding feeling was that I could not let the two of them go off in the middle of the night and have a clear conscience about it, so I switched to their route, which after some scrutiny, I admitted was actually better than mine and headed pretty much straight north towards Chesterfield (but also the Peak District) at around 64 miles.

The Training

I won't dwell too much on the training for this. I never really had a plan. It's hard to train for something when you haven't got a set distance to train towards, so it was really about 'time on feet' training and building up the distance. In the last few months leading up to the race I simply stepped up the mileage to a longest run of around 30 miles, and varied the routes to keep it interesting, including running to Manchester a couple of times, and visiting all corners of Huddersfield.

The Race



Eventually Sarah and Karen decided against it, so it was to be just me, although they both decided to come along for support, for which I was very grateful. They dropped me off in Meriden, wished me good luck and made their way up to a hotel in Derby for the night, where I would hopefully meet up with them in the morning, around 37 miles in.

The race briefing came and went at around 11.15pm and at around 11.45pm we made our way to the village green. At midnight we were 'released' with a very low-key start (we had to keep the noise down for the local residents) and over 200 of us disappeared into the rainy night using each of the five roads that led out of the village. Around 10-15 others were following the same route as me so, at least for a while, I had some company, but we soon spread out and I found myself alone for long stretches on rural roads with no streetlights or pavements,

which I found quite unnerving to start with, but soon settled into it. I just had to be on my guard for passing cars, so that helped to keep me focused.

I made good progress to start with, covering around 15 miles in the first 3 hours with, unusually for me, no major mishaps, except for a coughing fit courtesy of a rogue piece of Kendal mint cake lodging itself in my throat that I could only clear by eventually resorting to my emergency Cadburys Star Bar. Gutted!!

The rain was relentless by now and although I was moving well enough, I could feel myself getting colder – a combination of sweat from the inside and rain finding its way in from the outside.

I was getting pretty desperate to find somewhere to get changed into the dry gear I had with me (no checkpoints in this race remember) when I approached the village of Twycross, thinking there must be a bus shelter or a doorway I could utilise – no luck, until a phone booth loomed into view – not ideal, but needs must.

I know what you're thinking and, no, I didn't emerge as Superman. In fact, I didn't emerge at all for the next 20 minutes as I battled to try and get the wet base layers off and the dry stuff on. It's not an easy task to get wet clothes off even when you've got room to move – it's a whole new level of pain attempting it in a phone box!! The phone box steamed up; I knocked the phone receiver off the cradle countless times, and I don't mind telling you, the air turned blue. It must have looked pretty comical, but I'm just glad this occurred at 3.30 in the morning and the village was deserted.

Some time after leaving Twycross, I found myself seriously questioning my life choices when I passed the entrance to Champneys, the luxury spa. I stopped briefly and stood in the rain, looking longingly down the driveway, then trudged on. They probably wouldn't have let me in any way!!

Onwards to Derby, and thankfully without further incident, except for a cow mooing at me from behind a hedge in the dark when I wasn't expecting it . . . nearly jumped out of my skin!!



The rain eventually relented at around 7am and it was nice to finally have some daylight. I reached Derby at around 9am, with Sarah and Karen running out to meet me, and it was nice to have some company having been alone for most of the night. We made our way back to the hotel and I was so grateful to be able to grab a shower and get changed into dry clothes again, and to have a decent breakfast, before setting off again, feeling much better.

Having passed through the centre of Derby, the plan was that Sarah and Karen would drive on ahead and stop a couple of villages away then run back to meet me, turn around and run back to the car. This worked really well and, again, I was glad of the company as I was still running alone.

At around 44 miles, and still with 20 miles to go to reach Chesterfield, I was starting to feel the effects of losing a night's sleep and the pace slowed. My spirits were lifted every time Sarah and Karen appeared, but by 50 miles I had resigned myself to not making it to Chesterfield. I was back on roads with no pavements again and starting to 'lean' a bit and make

a few stumbles. With the roads being busier this was not ideal from a safety point of view. I carried on for another 5 miles, but I had also now started to hit the more frequent undulations of the Peak District. I was done.

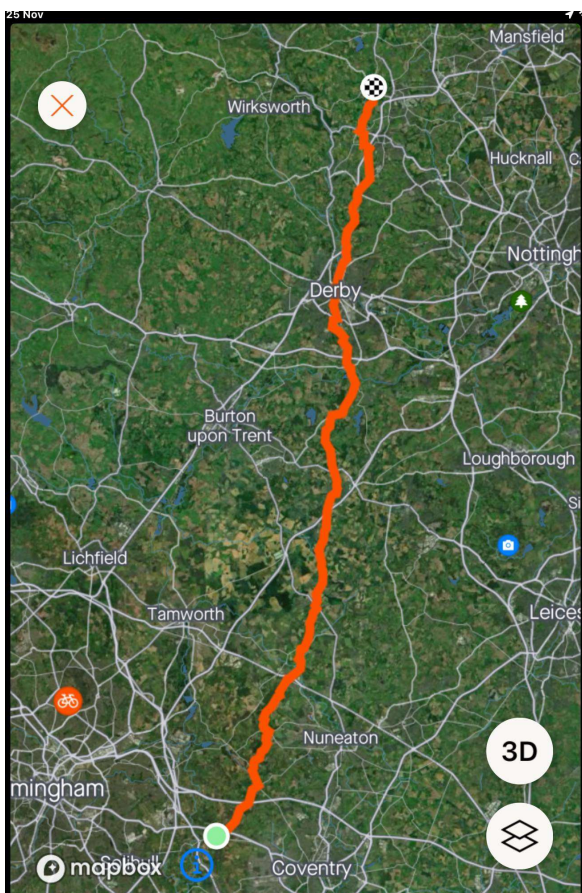
It probably sounds like I'm making excuses, but I don't think you can truly prepare for what this race does to you. You can train and plan as much as you need, but it's hard to keep your spirits up when it's the dead of night and you're out alone in relentless rain.

In the end I was out for 16 hours and made it to 55 miles, some 9 miles short of my intended target, so I was slightly disappointed. But it's better to take the positives out of it and I prefer to look at the distance I covered rather than the distance I didn't – this was more than two marathons in a day, the longest distance I have ever done, in weather that was quite frankly awful at times – and I'm quite proud of that.

My heartfelt thanks to my support crew, Sarah and Karen. They had no real need to be there, and I had no right to expect anyone to be there – but the face is they WERE there, and at the times when I needed them most.

For a race that gives you nothing really, apart from a start line and, at some point, a medal, it's quite addictive. So much so that I've gone and entered it again next year!

If you've taken the time to read this, thanks, I know I've gone on a bit. And maybe you're inspired to give it a go yourself? Surely the weather can't be that bad again, can it?



Roy's route out of Meriden



Routes chosen by other runners

Coaching with Colin Duffield

Lacing Up My Boots

Walking, what's the point?

Runners like to run and only feel satisfied when they get sweaty and out of breath, preferably when wearing shorts. Walking seems like an activity apart, a different thing altogether and something probably not beneficial to their training.

But, if we think that the majority of our endurance training should be done at 70% of our maximum heart rate, it starts to become apparent that many runners are missing a trick. Could a strenuous walk be useful for our training in the same way as an easy run? For the endurance athlete are there advantages to be had in swapping the occasional run for a walk?

Everyone loves a list, so here are a few reasons why you might want to reconsider how you view walking . . .

1. **Walking improves endurance and cardiovascular capacity.** A strenuous walk may well put you right in your long slow run cardiovascular zone, and most people can walk farther than they can run, so you can stay in the zone longer.
2. **Walking has less impact on your joints than running.** Obvious really, but important for those of us of a certain vintage who need to look after our bodies and avoid the boom and bust of a recurrent injury cycle.
3. **Walking strengthens bones and muscles.** Walking improves your strength and balance in the feet, knees and hips, which are all key body parts you need to run strong and injury-free.
4. **Walking is active recovery.** Recovery and adaptation are key elements after hard efforts like racing, intervals or tempo runs. Walking helps stimulate blood flow, aids in eliminating toxins, keeps muscles flexible, reduces soreness in muscles.
5. **Walking helps maintain a healthy weight.** It's an uncomfortable but unavoidable truth that excess weight hampers running, both from an injury perspective and an energy efficiency perspective. Walking may be a tool to help control it.
6. **Walking increases energy levels.** Walking improves oxygen flow through the body and boosts levels of cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine, the hormones that help raise your energy.
7. **Walking is sociable.** Because it is less intense than running, walking is something you can do with the kids, dog, non-runners, etc. More to life than running!
8. **Walking offers a mental break from running.** Walking a fab way to mix up your running routine and offers a mental break from the intensity of running and helps swerve burnout.
9. **Walking gets you into the fresh air.** On days you can't run, the benefit of fresh air, Vit D and being in nature can't be ignored.

So there it is. It's free, it's easy, it's enjoyable and it benefits running. What's not to like?

Stainland Lions'
Lion of the Month

CAROL ANN HEPTONSTALL

November 2023



Now regularly participating in park run and club runs and did her first 10k race back at Morley

She's remained relentlessly positive (at least in public). A total star!

Giving her all both physically and emotionally - her mental strength has been amazing.

During her rehab she supported her friends doing the Rob Burrow marathon and continued to support the club, helping out at races and marshalling.

She's been going to track and doing her own rehab and started back running after 10 months - 2 months sooner than the most optimistic prediction.

She has been determined to rehabilitate herself and has defied all her medics. Truly inspirational in many ways.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Away Run - November 2023 - Jonathan Pybus

The Wainhouse Tavern, Halifax

The Away Run in November was a return to a pub we had used a few years ago, which used to be called the Royal, and now called the Wainhouse Tavern. This is a great venue for us as we had a separate room that's big enough to take us, with food that was prepared by an experienced chef who used to be the chef at The Tower House Hotel. We were made very welcome and I think everybody enjoyed the food – and there was plenty of it.

I think everyone enjoyed the runs – with hills in most of them! I took a group up to Mount Tabor and everyone seems to enjoy it as much as you can enjoy night-time running.

December's Away Run is from a new pub – The New Inn at Sowood. If we can have 35 orders for food, we will have the pub to ourselves which will be great – but if not, we will just have allocated tables. So get booking your Christmas Away Run meals now!!

In The Lion's Den with Gav Dodd



Richard Spendlove



How long have you been running and how did you first start?

I started running in 1976 when, at the age of 29, I discovered the sport of orienteering. At school I had played a lot of rugby and a bit of athletics. I remember running a 56s 440yds (402m) on a grass track when I was 18. But at university I did no sport at all regrettably; I wish now that I had joined the cross-country club. So I was 29 when I started and it took 2-3 years to build up any stamina or speed. For a long time I only did orienteering events, but I started doing the odd road race or two and then fell races. I did the very first London Marathon in 1981 and was really pleased to get under 3 hrs – 2h 58. I didn't run many marathons, only 6 in total, but was pleased to get a PB of 2h 43m 58s at Nottingham in 1984.

What made you join the Lions?

I worked in Germany from 1985 to 2003 and when I retired and came back to Calderdale I joined Calder Valley, because I wanted to concentrate on fell running (in addition to orienteering that is. I've been a member of East Pennine Orienteering Club ever since 1979). However, Calder are only a fell running club, so after a while I joined the Lions so that I could do other things, especially Yorkshire Vets races.

What's been your best running experience/race to date?

From an emotional point of view it was the Berlin Marathon in 1990. The Wall had come down the previous year and it was the first time the race went into East Berlin. I will never forget running through the Brandenburg Gate, surrounded by German runners crying their eyes out. From a personal success point of view, it has to be both winning the M70 English Fell Running Championships in 2016 and coming 2nd M75 in the World Masters Mountain Running Championships in 2022 in Ireland. I won an individual Silver and a team Gold for GB.

Do you have any advice for a beginner?

Every runner is different, with different goals, so the main advice is make sure you enjoy it. But there is also the same advice I was given back in 1976 – "If you want to run faster, run faster". Once you have developed the initial stamina to keep going for 20-30 minutes, you shouldn't settle into a comfortable plod all the time. If you want to improve you have to incorporate some faster running into your training. And don't be afraid of hills, they are your best friend when it comes to improving performance!

What's your go to running shoe?

I have so many different shoes, for orienteering, fell races, trail races, road races, track races – so from a practical point of view it has to be the cheapest going, provided they are comfortable and fit for purpose. My track spikes came from a charity shop!

What do you do for work?

I've been retired for 20 years, but I was a teacher. I came to Calderdale in 1979 to work at Todmorden High School, introducing German into their curriculum as the town had just become twinned with Bramsche in Germany. Then in

1985 I went out to teach at King's School in Gütersloh in Germany, a British Forces School. I was Head of Modern Languages there for 14 years.

Favourite meal / restaurant?

I love most fish and seafood (except oysters) and Moroccan food. I don't go to many restaurants these days, but I have a favourite café – The Hub Café in Norland Church. It's Wednesday only, run by a team of brilliant volunteers, and with the best homemade cakes for miles around.

Favourite tippie?

Coffee and red wine.

Favourite holiday destination?

Because we worked all told for over 20 years in Germany and had either a campervan or a motorhome, my wife and I have driven all over Europe, from the far north of Norway to deep into Turkey. These days I don't want to be driving so far, so we're more likely to stay in the UK. However, we like to fly to Spain in the winter for several weeks and our favourite place at the moment is Almuñécar on the Costa Tropical South of Granada.

Any running or non-running bucket list items

In running I want to get to more Master's track events, maybe the European and/or World Championships (both are open entry). No travel bucket list these days – I've given up on waiting to go to Machu Picchu!

Any non-running related hobbies?

I enjoy researching local history, especially regarding Norland, where I live. My wife and I edited a booklet (Nobbut Norland) on the village in 2011, and I now have my own website – www.norlandvillagehistory.org.uk. I also still enjoy foreign languages and have been learning Spanish for a few years, and this year I've started on Dutch. Anyone who has ever used Duolingo to learn a language might appreciate the fact that I currently have a streak of 2067 days.

What's your Desert Island Disc (favourite group, album, concert)?

I enjoy all sorts of music so it's very hard to choose. My favourite years were the late 1950s and the 1960s, and I saw lots of people in concert (The Stones when they weren't top of the bill, Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, Brenda Lee, Bob Dylan when he was still solo and acoustic, Paul Simon in the upper room of a pub in Portsmouth with an audience of about 25!). If I had to choose an album, rather than one track, it would be the first Travelling Wilburys album, for the combined talent of Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan and George Harrison. If I had to choose just one piece of music it would be a solo guitar version of Concierto de Aranjuez by Rodriguez.



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