



# THE (HIPPENHAM HARRIER

*WINTER 2007 - EDITED BY CAROLINE BLAKE*

## **Editors Comments:**

Well here is the final newsletter for 2007 and what a year it has been seeing our membership tip over the 150 mark. Who knows maybe we will exceed 200 in 2008! Soon we will have half of Chippenham running, which is great as we have just found out that we are officially allowed to host our own half marathon next year in celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary - a definite date for your diary as we are going to need loads of help in making sure this is a successful event.

A much closer date for your diary is January 11<sup>th</sup> the Annual Dinner and Awards evening. Organised by Wiggy this social evening comprises of a lovely four course meal followed by presentations of awards for achievements throughout 2007. Tickets are selling like hot cakes so see Wiggy asap to avoid disappointment! And of course the highlight of the evening is the presentation of the annual awards for the club championship competition and achievement awards. See Paul Dodds article for all the final results for 2007 (or not if you don't want to spoil the surprise!)

Just as your head starts to clear from all the festive celebrations it's the Annual General Meeting (17<sup>th</sup> January). Held after the normal club run, the AGM reviews the previous year and sets to nominate the Committee for the forth coming year. Currently we are looking for four recruits to the team so if you would like to become involved (one committee meeting per month) then please make sure you come along and get voted on.

As we head into 2008 I would like to congratulate those who got club places for the London Marathon. Well done to Chris Hutton, Rich Faroppa and Nadege Coignard, good luck with the next few months of hard training, I am sure there will be many willing volunteers to help see you through the long miles.

Thanks to those who have contributed to this issue, firstly, this month Sue Stewart is our 'Runner of the Month, Ian Trussler tries to convince us (well me!) that the Neolithic Marathon is 'The One' to do, Paul Dodd summarizes the Club Championship for 2007 and Jeremy gives us an insight into the world of skittles. Thanks to Kevin Wright who supplies the jokes!

Finally, JD has managed to secure a cancellation of a Youth Hostel at Exford for the weekend starting 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 08. See his article at the back of this newsletter for more details.

Caroline Blake

# “Runner of the Month”

Name : Sue Stewart Tanner

Age : 48

Running Years : 10 (ish)

## When and why did you join the ‘Chippenham Harriers’?

Initially, two years ago, I joined as a second claim runner, with Corsham RC as my main club. However, I found that I was coming over to Chippenham to run most of the time, so it seemed sensible to resign from Corsham and just stick with the Harriers!

## What is your favourite race and why?

Slaughterford 9 – see ‘best running moments’

## What is your least favourite race and why?

Any 5k race and The Terminator! I’ve only done ‘The Terminator’ once and that was enough. I hated the steep downhill bits and just remember that I couldn’t even untie my own shoelaces at the end of it.

## To date what has been your best running ‘moment’?

Being first woman home in The Slaughterford 9 2003 in a new course record.

## What are your running aspirations for the future?

The Grizzly in 2008, plus a Mountain Marathon – if my running partner can avoid injury for several months! I would like to do a Marathon when I’m 50 – but I’ll see how I feel!

<u>Personal Best Details :</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Year</u>
	10k	41.26	2002
	10M	69.33	2003
	½ M		
	Marathon	3.38	2004

## **2007 Championship – by Paul Dodd**

The championship year is now over – the final showdown at a windy Wyvern was a fitting end to the 21 races. Apart from an over emphasis on long hilly muddy events at the start of the year I think the choice of events was pretty good. The short fast road blasts of Lacock and Heddington, contrasted nicely with the muddy ups and downs of the Terminator and the long, long, long final miles of a Marathon.

### **Facts and Figures:**

This year 105 members took part in championship races - 65 men, 41 ladies. (In 2006 it was 86 members of which 56 men, 30 ladies)

20 members completed 10 races – 13 men, 7 ladies (In 2006 we had 13 in total – 10 men, 3 ladies).

Kevin, Neil and Robbie completed 15 events and Brigid completed 13.

17 members completed a marathon in 2007.

The race with the most Harriers taking part this year was the May Lacock with 43, then came the Corsham 10k with 42 and then Bromham 10k with 39.

As we now have so many competing members, this year's trophies will be presented to the top 3 men and top 3 ladies in each of the Championships. Yes that's 12!

### **Men's:**

At the top end of the table there was quite a battle going on for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in both Championships.

Richard 'Schoffers' Schofield started the season off in blistering form with 5 straight 20 points finishes in the Open Championship. Those long hilly off road courses really suited him. Later in the season Peter and I came into form and snatched the 20 points in the shorter road races. Peter came out on top but it was a close run thing – in the end the 3 of us were only one point away from each other. Whilst competing in the same races, it was 6-4 to Peter, between him and I, so the best man won. Between Schoffers and me, it was 4-3 to him, but I gained more points by competing in races he didn't turn up to (see, there are tactics to this – it's not just about who is quickest!). Neil had a very consistent year and gained 4<sup>th</sup> ahead of Paul G in 5<sup>th</sup> and then Frank in 6<sup>th</sup>.

In the Age-Graded championship I managed to emulate Joc and achieve the maximum 200 points. Nic Pollastrone came a well-earned 4<sup>th</sup>, despite only completing 9 events. Scoop achieved 5<sup>th</sup> just ahead of Dom in 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Women's:**

It's good to see so many ladies vying for a top 3 slot. Sue started well and got her 10 events in early but didn't compete in the last 6 events. Mel on the other hand came on strong later in the year. It was good to see Debbie completing 10 events and giving Mel a run for her money in the 'Open'. Competing at the same races it was a 4-3 to Mel. Caroline after her 'rest' in 2005 and 2006 was back in form and was also keeping Debbie honest. It ended as 4-2 to Debbie. After an amazing year, Brigid finished in 5<sup>th</sup>, just ahead on Mandy in 6<sup>th</sup> and only one point behind Joc in 4<sup>th</sup>.

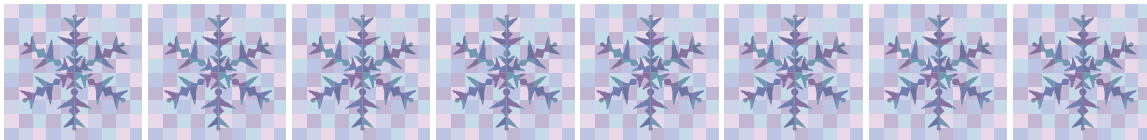
In the Age-Graded Joc completed 11 events and gained maximum points in each. She'd clinched the title at Cirencester in September. Mel's late surge wasn't enough to topple Joc (lack of years I'm afraid) but gave her a firm 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Sue's early season form gave her a big

points tally in the 'Age-Graded' but Caroline's consistent effort throughout the year and bravery in competing at Wyvern in testing conditions with little training gave her joint 3<sup>rd</sup> with Sue. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place went to Debbie and Brigid respectively.

There have been loads of great battles in the main body of the table between members and no doubt there are many people justifiably proud of beating someone who they see as a rival or who beat them last year. If you're anything like me, competing against someone of similar ability is a great motivator to get out and train – even on the darkest coldest nights. And that in essence is what the championship is all about - Motivation. That, and the sense of camaraderie and friendship gained in competing at the same event as loads of others wearing the Harrier's vest.

Here's to next year..... BUT..... remember..... you need to compete in 10 events to ensure you're in the position you deserve to be on the championship table.

Get your entries in now for the first races of the year, especially Longleat 10k and FOD half Marathon which can fill up quickly. The Rough and Tumble is filling up fast too and it's really not that long to go now ..... so get out there and start your hilly muddy training now. Good luck!



Two cannibals eating a clown. One says to the other "Does this taste funny to you?"

Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid, the other was eating fireworks. They charged one and let the other one off.

"Now, most dentists' chairs go up and down, don't they? The one I was in went back and forwards. I thought 'This is unusual' and the dentist said to me 'Mr Cooper, get out of the filing cabinet.'"

## **The 'Neolithic' Marathon** by Ian Trussler

One of the main fund raising events of the year for the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is its annual 26 mile event from Avebury to Stonehenge. This is both a sponsored walk and a multi-terrain running race.

In 2003 Lynne and I walked the full distance. We were the first to start at about 6am and almost the last to finish but we had a very nice day strolling along through a variety of Wiltshire countryside. I was somewhat hampered by the fact that we had just returned from a walking holiday on the Isle of Man and whilst the airline had delivered us safely back to Bristol Airport it had seen fit to send my walking boots to Belfast instead. As all long distance runners will agree, you do need to be happy about your footwear. I found out that day what happens when you are not...

Shortly before the half-way point we began to be caught by the marathon runners; they had started several hours after us. Although I had run in races over the years, there was something about these madmen (and mad-ladies) that touched a nerve. I started to form a plan, which was that I would run in the marathon myself the next year.

The plan was not over-crowded with schemes to get fit in the preceding months. My records show me running the Slaughterford (my first event as a Harrier), the Terminator and the London Half Marathon in the weeks before the big day. I continued to run in the hills around the University at Bath much as I had done for the previous twenty years, rather oblivious to fellow runners doing their weekend long runs to prepare for the London Marathon etc., and as for such technicalities as a 'taper'... wassat? I also continued to enjoy such training aids as chips, long bicycle rides and freezing days in bird-watching hides. Still, with my malt & hop-derived muscle stimulant, how could I go wrong?

On a rather misty May morning I find myself in the oddest bus queue of all time, all of Great Britain's greatest eccentrics gathered together in one place and catching a bus from Stonehenge at dawn. We are taking advantage of the bus service which ferries runners (and walkers) from various finish points to their chosen point of starting. Obviously all the full marathon runners want to start in Avebury but to find their car waiting for them at Stonehenge. Most of the participants are just like you and me, but on our bus one runner stands out as somewhat more impressive. Together with his 'buddy' he is going to run 26 multi-terrain miles without the benefit of eyesight. I feel rather humble at that point!

The bus arrives in Avebury in very good time for the start and I am able to enjoy the normal good cheer which passes between competitors. To be fair this is the only time that I will see most of them.

Soon we are being hushed to hear the advice of the starter and the words of some dignitary who is probably saying what brave buffoons we all are; I can't hear. On the other hand he may be telling us that his pit-bull terrier hasn't been fed since Thursday and if we don't leave Avebury immediately... Either way, we soon leave town and head out along the narrow road to the west and into a series of paths and tracks.

Upon reaching the main A4 we are hugely amused to discover half of the field approaching us from the opposite direction, so clearly some of the marshalling will be 'iffy'! The road

crossing at Beckhampton is well controlled though and we cross in safety and start along the path which will lead to the Marlborough Downs. This is a considerable climb which is mostly on field-edge tracks of the sort made 'smooth' by the passage of several dozen tractors each year. The top of this hill is the highest point in Wiltshire, Tan Hill at 294 metres, a climb of about 140m from the start-line. Near the top, the ancient earthwork, Wansdyke is crossed, followed by a sharp drop and then a sharp climb to the hill-fort of Rybury Camp. There follows a tricky descent to the lane near All Cannings Cross. Here there are water and toilets, mostly for the benefit of the sponsored walkers.

The next section is a series of lowland tracks leading to the main street of All Cannings, a pretty thatched village where the villagers put on a feast of sausage sandwiches for the walkers. Next time I run I'll carry money for one; it'll be worth the time lost.

All Cannings is left behind as one plods through a not-very-nice quagmire caused by the route coinciding with the main commuter route for 200 Friesians. It doesn't last for long though and there soon follows one of the few tarmac sections. Nice easy running that feels madly fast after the off-road section. There's some nice surfaced bridle-path and then a boggy section which includes a couple of stiles. At this point is something I have yet to encounter in any other running race. You cross a 125mph railway-line. "Stop, look and listen." says the sign... Damned right you do!

More pleasant countryside passes and then suddenly the A342 is encountered. After this is crossed, the route is tarmac surfaced for nearly 2 miles. Don't think this is some sort of holiday as in the distance can be seen Redhorn Hill, a 75 metre climb and a walk for most competitors.

At the top is a crowded area of tents and tea vans where most of the walkers will stop for a bite and a rest. Hard to drag myself past these attractions but apart from filling up my water bottle I don't pause.

The route turns left here; ahead are army firing ranges. Our path is a shingle path of varying quality and often crowded with walkers and their dogs plus the vehicles of various participants all heading east in a voluntary one-way system. A place called Charlton Clumps is reached, the start of the half-marathon, and for us, the halfway point. There is a water station there and other 'facilities', plus the litter of 400 half-marathoners.

At times the road turns nasty and has a few climbs. These climbs seem visible from miles back so by the time you get to them, your resolve has melted away. However for every up there is a down and progress is made after all. One of the most significant climbs of the day comes after Casterley Camp, another Iron Age hill fort, at about 15 miles. The track, climbs out of Water Dean Bottom. It's an excuse for a walk for many. From the top of that climb though, the trend is generally downhill for the rest of the way to Wexland Farm where runners take a sharp right into the heart of the military training zone. The next four miles are frankly dull, very slightly uphill and quite featureless. At least you can concentrate properly on the suffering along that section. Eventually the junction with the old coach road appears though, where a left turn is made and a rather forlorn pub, the Bustard Inn, stands surrounded by a permanent caravan site and various military 'street furniture'. Sadly the pub must be shunned on this occasion though I have been glad of its presence on many a cold winter's day whilst cycling. Ahead of me I see Lynne, and her friend Debbie, walking in the sponsored walk from Redhorn Hill to Stonehenge. I can't resist clowning and empty my water bottle over Lynne as I jog past.

The road becomes tarmac for a mile then the fast road to Larkhill is reached and the course takes to the grass track alongside. Soon a marshal sends us across the road and into a private drive for a mile.

It is along this drive that a pile of very ancient rocks appears on the horizon for the first time and a grin replaces a grimace for the first time. The end is in sight. The last mile is an agony and an ecstasy and the last hundred yards a delirious dream. I achieve something for the first time in my life; I finish a marathon. Sitting down near the finish line I do something else for the first time in my life. I fall asleep in a public place. A marshal wakes me up to give me my finisher's medal. I find the car and continue my snooze in the boot of the car.

The run has taken its toll. Somewhere at about the 18 mile point I had felt the pressure on my increasingly sore right foot ease off, accompanied by a damp feeling. A vast blister had burst. Both feet had suffered but the marathon has really exposed the weakness in my right foot and by the end I had lost three toe-nails. (To say I had lost them is a bit inaccurate. I knew precisely where they were – somewhere in my sock!)

With the benefit of hindsight I would have run in road shoes. I had run in off-road shoes, well suited to the Marlborough Downs section early in the race but hopelessly lacking in cushioning for the majority of the miles.

I took 4-22-35 to finish and a further 11 months to enter my next race, a doddle round the woods called the Chedworth Roman Trail.

The Neolithic is no place to be if you want to do a PB and some aspects of it lack the polish of events run by experienced running clubs, but over the years it is improving. It remains one of my most cherished memories. I'm sure I will run in it again one day, hopefully soon.



"So I got home, and the phone was ringing. I picked it up, and said 'Who's speaking please?' And a voice said 'You are.'"

"So I rang up my local swimming baths. I said 'Is that the local swimming baths?' He said 'It depends where you're calling from.'"

"So I rang up a local building firm, I said 'I want a skip outside my house.' He said 'I'm not stopping you.'"

"Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. And there are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my dad. Or my older brother Colin. Or my younger brother Ho-Cha-Chu. But I think it's Colin."

## Chippenham Harriers - Top of the League! By Jeremy Coward

Before you start thinking this is to do with running..... stop, no we are not leading any Cross Country league... no this is the 'alternative' sport of the Chippenham Harriers – skittles.

'Road Runners' the name by which this elite team is known, was formed just over a year ago, and is currently taking Division 3 of the 'Chippenham Sports Club In-house skittle league' by storm.

Now in their second year of play (the skittle year runs from Sept to April) 'Road Runners' are currently leading their division. Hoping to continue with their winning form they hope to achieve 'promotion' to division 2 at the end of this season. However, we are only just through the first half of the skittles year so there is still a long way to go, we will have to remain in the top 3 to ensure we go up to Division 2 next year.

The team comprises of Ian 'Wiggy' Wiggins (Captain) , Chris Constable, Paul Edwards, Ian Trussler, Jeremy Coward, Frank Checchia, Neil and Kelly Perry and Liam Wiggins. Each game requires six players with a maximum allowed of ten in a team. If more than six turn up for a match the team gets a re-shuffle at half time dropping out the poorest performers!

Currently there are 30 teams playing in the three leagues with roughly one game each week throughout the season. The other teams are made up from the other clubs within the 'Chippenham Sports & Social Club'. It is a great way to meet others who share the same facilities as us even if we can't persuade them to join us for a run!

Apart from the main league competition there are other competitions held throughout the year, however so far we have not been too successful in these! But challenges such as the Captains Cup and knockout add an extra bit of variety to the usual games.

If you would like to get involved in the 'Road Runners' skittles team then do not hesitate to contact any current member of the team.... who knows we may get enough players to set up Road Runners II ! Or even if you don't fancy playing then you are always more than welcome just to come along and support. Its usually a lot warmer than supporting a running race in the winter and instead of a cake stall there is a bar.... anyone need any more persuasion?



"So I was in my car, and I was driving along, and my boss rang up, and he said 'You've been promoted.' And I swerved. And then he rang up a second time and said "You've been promoted again.' And I swerved again. He rang up a third time and said 'You're managing director.' And I went into a tree. And a policeman came up and said 'What happened to you?' And I Said 'I careered off the road.'

## **What's Happening in the next few months? .....**

**11<sup>th</sup> Jan 08 - Annual Club Dinner and Presentations**

**17<sup>th</sup> Jan 08 - Club AGM**

**9<sup>th</sup> May 08 - Beginners Club starts again!**

**14<sup>th</sup> September 08 - Chippenham Harriers Half Marathon**

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### **EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED --- YOUTH HOSTEL WEEKEND 29 FEB**

A late booking cancellation of the Youth Hostel at EXFORD on the outskirts of Exmoor, not far from Minehead, has enabled Chippenham Harriers to hire the hostel for the weekend Friday 29 Feb to 2 Mar 2008. Given the success of this popular Harriers event, despite the somewhat short notice, I'm sure many of you will wish to participate in a great weekend of walking, running, off-road cycling, not to mention the opportunity to spend a few days and nights socializing with your fellow HARRIERS.

The cost per person for the weekend will be £30.

For those of you who have not hostelled before with the Harriers, and wish to know more about what the weekend entails with regard to activities, eating, sleeping arrangements, etc, please contact JD -telephone 01225 700137, or any member of the Club who has previously participated in a YHA Weekend.

**Given the limited time period between now and the Hostel Weekend, I need to establish the names of those wishing to attend, and therefore please let JD have your names, and money, by 20 Jan 08 at the latest.**

### **Chippenham Harriers Committee 2007**

Charlotte Watkins - Chairperson

Ann Slator - Club Secretary

Mandy Peaple - Treasurer

Chris Constable - Committee Member

Ian Wiggins - Social Events Organiser

Caroline Blake - Newsletter Editor

Neil Perry - Website Administrator

Jon Rich - Committee Member

Paul Gillham - Team Race Co-ordinator

Nadege Coignard - Health & Safety Officer

Steve Wood - Committee Member

John Duckenfield

Don't forget the current Committee is up for renewal on January 17<sup>th</sup> at the Annual AGM – so if you want to get involved now is your chance....