



South West Road Runners Newsletter August 2014

From the editor

Here it is, the rather delayed newsletter, originally planned for June and now almost three months late. However the committee has probably come up with a solution – to make the items in to a blog. So this may be the last in the current format.....

Kathryn Hough

Fulford Five

An early event in the running calendar year - remember this five mile dash round the seafront and streets of Exmouth. This year the weather was kind and we didn't all get sand in our faces as we raced along the front.



With many thanks to Mike Feighan's wife for the photos.

Keeping In Step

InStep Devon – if you're new to running, we'll help you to get started. If you're already a runner, we'll help you to get more out of the sport

In the last edition, Tony Gale (longstanding member of SWRR and Chair of InStep) told us about the launch of InStep Devon – the running network for the Exeter area, East Devon and Mid Devon. This time, he brings us up to date.



InStep has been going for a little over a year. I think we've achieved a lot in that time.

You may remember that our ambition is to support both new and established runners in the area. That means bringing new people into the sport and improving the quality of what's on offer to people like SWRR members who have already discovered the delights of running.

New Runners

Some excellent results - working with local clubs and Run England groups, we've registered over 350 new runners since last September. We've helped new groups with advice and support and we've encouraged networking between groups.

Existing Runners

We've been able to offer financial support to train leaders and coaches for various clubs, including SWRR – helping to ensure that they can offer a good range of opportunities for runners like you. Just think about how many leaders it takes to cover all the groups each Wednesday night. They all have to be trained, and the money for that has to come from somewhere.

We've been running the InStep Championship, which I talked about last time. With six of the year's ten events now behind us, we have results from over 100 members of local clubs in the rankings. SWRR is doing particularly well – currently leading the field in the FV35, MV40, FV45 and MV60 categories, along with many other high-scoring places. The competition will become more intriguing as more and more runners chalk up more scores (remember, "best five results to count") – I expect to see changing fortunes by the time we get to Event 10. We've also provided support to local events, including the Age UK Exeter 10k.

What's Next?

There are some interesting ideas in the pipeline – including working with local schools and colleges to get more young people into the sport, working with the health service to create opportunities for improving the health and wellbeing of adults who, for whatever reason, aren't currently involved in sport.

But I'm getting ahead of myself – more about that next time.

Tony Gale

Mikes Marathon - London 13th April 2014

Sunday April 21st 2013, I woke up late, flicked on the television and stumbled across coverage of the London marathon as they were doing the pre start interviews with celebrities and the public. I had that thought, "If they can do it, surely I can".

I entered the ballot. Several months later a magazine arrived confirming my place for 2014. There was a mix of emotions, obviously I was excited, but, I'd never run more than 9 miles before, how was I going to be able to run a further 16.2? My solution was to join a club - a quick Google brought SWRR to my attention.

The first couple of training months just consisted of the club night on a Wednesday. Dave Moulder's Marathon Training Group kicked off in early January and I started running twice a week! The first session I could make was a sunny Saturday morning with a route starting in Exmouth and finishing up Beacon Hill in Exeter. I was on my last legs by the time we got to Beacon Hill. But I'd done it, managed to hold onto the group, and it was the furthest I'd ever run.

Things were going well, I was finding the long run on a Saturday getting easier and upped my training to three times a week. Then I got injured. It stopped me running for a month. By now there was just over a month to race day and the dream of a 3:30 marathon seemed long gone. I decided the only way forward was to train on my own so that I could make every run count. Short runs in the week would be fast. The long weekend run would be slower but below target pace. The logic, if I get use to a quicker pace than I plan to run on Marathon day, marathon pace should be easy!

Marathon day arrived - due to the injury the furthest I'd managed in the build-up was just 17 miles. This meant I had 9.2 miles of unknown at the end. Despite this I was incredibly relaxed the morning of the run, I got to the start area in good time and

before I knew it we had to get to our starting pen.

Bang, we were off and happily I was still feeling remarkably relaxed. The first mile was the usual start stop, hustle and bustle I was expecting. I remember having to hold myself back over the first few miles downhill and far too easy to get carried away! I was running on pace doing my best to soak up as much of the atmosphere as I could. I saw my family and given them a wave, which was that box ticked. I made it to the half-way point on time - could I hold on for the second half and hit 3:30? This thought was soon interpreted by a wall of sound coming towards me, it was Mo! As he zoomed past I found myself cheering at the top of my voice, feeling incredibly excited that I'd seen him and that I was running in the same race.

Next were the couple of miles through Canary Warf. I was now into new territory having not run that far before and I was starting to suffer. As a result my pace slipped a little and it was the first time I had slowed to a pace outside my target time.

Mile 20, and I had made it out of Canary Warf, the ground had levelled and I was back on pace. How hard can it be, there's only 10k to go!?

Another three miles done and things seemed ok, and then the going got tough! I was hanging on now, having that mental battle to continue running even though everything was screaming at me to stop. I managed for a further two miles just about on pace when I hit the 25 mile marker. A glance down at the watch said I had over 12 minutes to get in and with that thought I lost the mental battle, I began to walk. 200m later the relentless crowd picked me back up and I was running again. As I rounded the corner past Big Ben I could see the countdown markers 800m to go, "2 laps of a track"... "I can do that"... 400m to go... "that 800m marker was definitely in the wrong place"... 200m and I'm on the Mall... **FINISH LINE!**

Mike Rudd | 03h : 28m : 24s

A Marathon, Deconstructed.

I blame those endless TV cookery programmes. You know, the ones where they're always banging on about recipes where something is "deconstructed". No, I don't get it, either.

But Colworth Striders, up in Bedfordshire, do. Their Colworth Marathon Challenge, held in June, runs three events back-to-back over a weekend. A five-mile run on Friday, 8.1 on Saturday, and a half marathon on Sunday. A marathon, deconstructed, as you might say.

The club is based at Colworth Science Park. It has great sports facilities. My daughter, who's been working up there this year, mentioned the race to me last Christmas. You know how it is, at that time of year – the thought of doing something "a bit novel" in high summer sounds very tempting. I was particularly fascinated by the question of how to train for this, and how hard to run each of the three events.

Friday 20th June, 7:00 pm

I'm on the starting line of the 5 miler. It's a beautiful evening.

My plan is to run this race at 7:30 pace, bearing in mind that although it's only five miles, it is also the first five miles of a marathon. The gun goes off, and 350+ runners head off on a gentle climb around the playing fields and onto a farm track. This feels a bit fast. At half-a-mile I'm on 6:45 pace. Slow down, Tone.



As well as the Marathon Challenge, runners can also choose to run any of these races in their own right. So as I slow down, I don't know how many of the people forging past me are just racing over five miles this weekend. I resolve to stick to my planned pace, and finish feeling fresh having run the five miles at 7:36 pace. A good start.

Saturday 21st June, 12 noon

Another beautiful day, possibly a bit humid. Or maybe that's just a psychological reaction to reading the results of Day One and finding that I'm lying in third place among the MV60s. I'd hoped for better than that. Are the two guys ahead of me doing the full challenge? Who knows? Let's concentrate on today's event.

Today's event is badged as a "cross country" run. Considering that the five-miler was described as "multi-terrain" but was off-road for at least four-and-a-half miles, I wonder what that means. I'm about to find out.

It's not very hilly around Colworth. "Undulating" is about the right word. But even so, running off-road always slows me down. It had been noticeably hot and dry in the weeks leading up to the race, so the mud was baked hard. I found this difficult when, after three miles, we entered a narrow, deeply-rutted lane.

Runners ahead of me were dodging ruts, twisting ankles, taking long-and-short steps to negotiate tricky bits of the path. My early pace was slowing, slowing – but so was theirs. My gosh, this lane goes on a bit. Somewhere around the five mile point there are runners coming back towards us. Yes, it's an out-and-back stretch. And we spend a total of nearly five miles hacking our way out and back along the rutted paths. Strength-sapping, ankle-twisting, slow-moving. But in one way, this is no bad thing – I am not tempted to push on at the sort of pace that would leave my legs aching for tomorrow.

Mind you, I was shocked to find that I completed the 8.1 miles at a fraction under 8:30 pace. But was that so bad? Chatting to a fellow oldie who finished just behind me, I established that he was one of the two V60s who beat me on Friday. So, game on for tomorrow.

Sunday 22nd June, 10:30am

Guess what? Another beautiful day. Could be a bit warm for running a multi terrain half marathon (and yes, I've already established that that means virtually all off-road).

They've posted the results from the first two events. The MV60 who won the five miler didn't do Saturday's race. I start today having to make up 90 seconds on the guy I was speaking to last night if I'm going to win my age category.

Remarkably, my legs feel fine. I'm quite tired, but I reckon I can manage something close to 8:00 pace. That's fine for the first few miles, but then I realise it's not sustainable. Too hot, too weary. Negative thoughts start piling in. OK, let's drop the pace and find something I can maintain.

It's a two-lap course. I complete Lap One (approx 6.5 miles) in 55 minutes. Ouch. Can I do Lap Two any faster? Probably not.

Hang on in there. I'm feeling "empty" like the last few miles of a marathon – but my legs aren't hurting as much as they usually do at that stage. I know my main competitor is somewhere behind me, which spurs me on.

We finish by running half a lap of the Colworth Playing Field. I have enough left in my legs to overtake a couple of guys as we trundle to the finish. At 1:54:37 this is the slowest half-marathon I've ever done, by a huge margin.

But wait...who's that in the distance? My main opposition. I look at my watch, I look at the finish clock. He finishes two-and-a-bit minutes behind me. Over three days and 26.2 miles, I have won the MV60 category in the Colworth Marathon Challenge by 40 seconds.

Lifting the trophy felt great. But what a challenge. I have to admit I did feel a bit deconstructed.

Tony Gale

Mike Feighan on how to win The Grizzly!

Most normal club runners would be pleased enough to finish the Grizzly. Axe Valley Runners website bills it as "The Twentyish muddy, hilly, boggy, beachy miles of the multiest-terrain running experience you will find this side of the end of time. Whatever it isn't, it is an experience." However South West Road Runner Mike Feighan has not only run it numerous times but has won it on five occasions. If you want to know how then his six week pre-race training regimes follow. By the way, you do need to be able to run 32:30 for 10k at the start of the build-up. Even for us lesser mortals who have no chance of emulating such speed, Mike's training for this event is worth studying and trying at our own pace. It shows that, for a fit runner, then even a really severe setback not long before an event can be overcome as Mike was hospitalised with cellulitis of the foot six weeks before his 1999 victory.

	1996	1997	1999	2001	2003
Mon	10 e	6 e	hospital	6am / 8pm	Rest/gym
Tue	8 - 6 in 31:45	6 good	hospital	7am/6pm	Rest
Wed	8 e	6	discharged	20	Rest/gym
Thur	10 with 7x3 min reps, 1min rec	10	1 walk - crutches!	11 with 6x6 min reps, 1 min rec	Rest
Fri	8 e	6 e	2 walk - no crutches	10	8 e
Sat	Rest	8 e	4 jog	Rest	8
Sun	14 with 40mins on shingle	Rest	6 slow	32	10 with 2x5 short hill sets
Mon	10 coast path	8 e	8	6am/8pm with strides	6/gym
Tue	8 - 6 in 32:14	7	10	10	6 with 20min t
Wed	10 e	8	10	22	16 coast with hill session
Thur	4am/5pm 6x600m (1:44), 1min rec	10	12	10	6/gym
Fri	6 e	8	12	8am/4pm	6
Sat	XC race	6	6	Rest	7 with 2x15min t
Sun	16 e	5 - race 25:40	10	Rest	18 with 6x1min strides
Mon	4am/6pm	10 good	10 fartlek - shingle	8am/6pm	6e/gym
Tue	8 - 5 t	8 e	8 inc 5000m track 16:42	10	7 with 2x15m t
Wed	10 e	10 good	8 coast	22	6
Thur	4am/6pm 8x500m (1:23), 1 min rec	8 e	8	7am/6pm	10 with 5x3m
Fri	8 e	10 good	Rest	12	Rest
Sat	6 e	6 e	Intercounties XC	Rest	4am/XC race
Sun	8 multi terrain race	10 - 6 h	5 - race 27:34	10	17
Mon	4am/6pm	14	8 e	6am/8pm with strides	6/gym
Tue	4am/8pm	10	10 e	8	16 coast with hill session
Wed	10	10 slow	10 with 4x1 hills	14 coast - good	6
Thur	4am/6pm 10x400m (1:06), 1 min rec	10 with strides	12	10 coast - good	8/gym
Fri	6	10	10	Rest	10 with 6x5min
Sat	Rest	6	6	10	6 e
Sun	18	14 - 4x1 reps	Half marathon 13:17	14 - 2x20min t	12 - 2x20min t - shingle
Mon	8	10 e	8	8 - 10x1min reps	Rest
Tue	4am/8pm - 6 in 32:04	10 fartlek	8	15 coast	10 fartlek - shingle
Wed	6	10 coast	10 with 6x3min	10 with 6x3min	6 e/gym
Thur	4am/6pm 8x600m (1:48), 1 min rec	14 coast	8	9 coast	8/gym
Fri	Rest	10 slow	8	10 with 10x1min	10 with 6x3min
Sat	Rest	8 e	Rest	Rest	6 e
Sun	XC race	XC race	12 with 2x15min t	10 with 1x20min t	11 with 2x15min t
Mon	6 e	6	8	6am/6pm	6 e/gym
Tue	8 with 6 in 31:26	Rest	8	8 with 5x3min	6 e
Wed	6 e	10	10 with 6x3min	8 e	8 with 6x1min
Thur	7 with 6x500m (1:24), 1 min rec	6 quite hard	8	6	6 e
Fri	8 e	Rest	8	7am/6pm	Swim
Sat	Rest	4	Rest	Rest	4
Sun	GRIZZLY 1st	GRIZZLY 1st	GRIZZLY 1st	GRIZZLY 1st	GRIZZLY 1st

e = easy

t = tempo

Mike says that key sessions are reps / track, tempo runs and long runs. Training has to be varied to optimise success in multi terrain events. Your body has to be used to running at different paces, tolerating lactic acid and running hard even when tired.

Pip Hayes on alternatives for the older athlete

Three women on a walk (to say nothing of the dog)

As maturity and wisdom set in, some runners turn to the hills for a healthy mix of long distance walks to break up the miles on the tarmac. The medically minded and cautious amongst us observe that middle-aged women skiers almost all end up with ruptured anterior cruciate ligaments, and the cyclists all fracture something sooner or later. So, why not settle for 104 miles walking The Two Moors Way through spectacular scenery and agonising blisters (Pip's feet)?



Once we had found the start of the path in Lynmouth we headed uphill for the first few hours in blazing spring sunshine, surrounded by glorious flowers and birdsong. At our coffee stop at Hillsford Bridge Finn attracted the attention of a springer/collie cross called Joe. One hour later, as we crossed Cheriton Ridge on the open moor, Joe was still with us and had started to chase sheep. Fortunately Pip had a

spare lead and we phoned Joe's owner (number on collar), promising to hand him over when we reached the next road. This took a long time as we stopped for lunch then lost the path near the source of the Exe. Next road reached but no dog owner and we somehow managed to persuade a farmer to take Joe and recontact the owner. The Royal Oak at Withypool was a rather luxurious first pub stay- with white bath robes, soft beds and good food.

The downside of staying at lovely pubs is that the landlords cannot be persuaded to serve breakfast before 8.30. Never mind - the cooked breakfast fits nicely into a sandwich to be eaten later that day for lunch, apart from Kathryn who ate the cooked breakfast then bought an enormous sausage roll from the village shop ready for lunch.

The walk along the River Barle to Tarr Steps has to be one of the most beautiful in Devon. Pip kept stopping to photograph the orchids and other wild flowers. When we arrived at Tarr Steps there was a landscape photography class taking place and a black cap's energetic song was a superb accompaniment to our coffee break.



We headed uphill. The remoteness of Exmoor was really evident. The weather was dry but we were fortunate as we could see the dark clouds further south. We chanced upon an isolated naturist camp surrounded by high walls - a red square on the map which denotes a resort or holiday camp - this gave us something to chat about for the next 30 minutes or so as we headed towards The Mitre Inn at Witheridge.

Our third day proved to be the most challenging with 23 miles of mid Devon to cover albeit between the moors. Some muddy fields and tracks, a slight wrong turn across fields (Kathryn was navigating and doesn't know left from right), frisky bullocks, rain and the onset of serious pain in Pip's left little toe slowed us down significantly. Eventually we arrived at The Drewe Arms for fish and chip supper amongst a crowd of locals followed by a night in the bunk house.

Day 4 and Sue decided that discretion was the better part of valour- she pulled out and collected her car from Dunsford, meeting us later in Widecombe.

The walk from Drewsteignton to Widecombe includes several sections familiar to Pip and Finn from The Chagford Challenge - an annual 30 mile challenge walk which is highly recommended. Higher Venton Farm in Widecombe is a truly characterful B&B in an old Devonshire farmhouse (check it out on the internet for the history). We were made to feel very welcome and we enjoyed a delicious meal the The Rugglestone Inn. We even met a typical Widecombe man who Pip persuaded to pose in a picture with us.



Our last day was fairly strenuous, with some significant uphill walking beyond Holne and an absolute route march for the last 8 miles across southern Dartmoor to Ivybridge. Fortunately the stream near the Huntingdon Cross was low enough to get over and there was a convenient and intact clapper bridge over the River Avon.

Pip was in so much pain when she took her boots off that she cried through the venison road kill supper which Rory had prepared for her! Kathryn went running the next day and back in Ivybridge the following weekend for the 10k race. Finn also appeared to be intact.

Would we do similar again- of course we would, but Pip will wear some less leaky boots! Ask Pip if you want to see some more photos!

And finally – another alternative SWRR at the Quay Climbing Centre

