

STRATFORD UPON AVON ATHLETIC CLUB



NEWSLETTER

Issue No 16 Mar 2007

Abbreviated minutes from the Club AGM are included in this newsletter but I thought that I would take the opportunity to highlight the various office holders (Seniors) who all contribute to the overall smooth and successful running of the Club.

Apart from the Fund Raising Coordinator all positions are filled but that doesn't mean that further help isn't required. Each position includes a variety of tasks that can be shared out to lighten the load. If you have some spare time available and would like to help the club please speak to any committee member. Your help would be much appreciated and guidance / help is always available to new volunteers.

On a personal level I am looking for some help in advance of the Summer Six which this year is on the 7th July plus lots of help on the day marshalling etc.

If you can help please let me know.

MAIN COMMITTEE		OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES	
Life President	John Dell	Club Kit Co-ordinator	Anna Schofield
Chairman	Paul Hawkins	Cross Country Secretary	Paul Hawkins
Secretary	Ashley Sherren	Family Fun Run Organiser	Sarah Odell
Treasurer	Malcolm Higham	Fund Raising Coord	Vacant
Membership Sec	Lesley Kirk	Grand Prix Secretary	Malcolm Bowyer
Committee	Sarah Bland	Hilly 100 Event Organiser	Ashley Sherren
Committee	Malcolm Bowyer	Hilly 100 Men's Team	Rob Minton
Committee	Yvonne Caswell	Hilly 100 Women's Team	Dawn Davies
Committee	Dawn Davies	Newsletter Editor	Tony Jackson
Committee	Keith Hawkes	NTR IX Race Director	Ashley Sherren
Committee	Tony Jackson	Press Officer	Keith Hawkes
Committee	Steve Kirk	Shakespeare Comp Secretary	Ashley Sherren
Committee	Geoff Vance	Social Secretary	Debbie Cooper
		Summer 6 Race Director	Tony Jackson
		T&F Team Manager (men)	Paul Hawkins
		T&F Team Manager (women)	Yvonne Caswell
		Triathlon Secretary	Steve Kirk
		Web-site Coordinator	Steve Kirk
		Welcombe Cross Race Director	Sarah Bland

Tony Jackson
Editor

Contact the Editor - Articles / Feedback Wanted

You can get in touch with me by any of the following

Write to 32 Sanctus Road Stratford upon Avon CV37 9AE

E mail to Tony.Jackson@nfumutual.co.uk or Anthony.Jackson@ntlworld.com

Tel No 01789 - 209102

Talk to me* @ training on Mondays, Wednesdays or on a Sunday Morning

Birmingham XC League Div 4

After last years disappointment that ended with relegation the Mens Senior XC team (aided by some excellent junior performances) clinched promotion with another fine team performance at Stafford on the 17th February. Going into the last race we still had faint ambitions of winning the league but on the day we were no match for a very strong Bourneville team. This meant that the final league table was

1. Bourneville	447
2. Stratford	551
3. Trentham	704
4. Stafford	777
5. Sneyd	817
6. Chase	1103
7. Cobra	1306
8. Telford	1451
9. AF	1481
10. Saracens	1569
11. Aldridge	1626
12. Peel	1750
13. Massey Ferguson	2206

Droitwich & Alvis didn't complete a team in all the matches.

However there was even better news in the B competition where our strength in depth meant that we completed a team in each of the four matches (one of only 3 clubs to do so) and were rewarded with a narrow overall victory over Bourneville B.

1. Stratford	1443
2. Bourneville	1479
3. Sneyd	1979

Individually we had three winners:

Joe Brocklehurst	2nd Senior
Jason Harman	2nd Junior
Luke Watkins	3rd Junior

Joe has had an excellent season and to finish 2nd Senior overall is a fantastic achievement. Unfortunately being a typical student his ability to get up early on a Saturday and make it to the race in good time is still something to be worked upon!

A special mention also to Jason Harman who has truly come of age over the winter, with improvement of such extent that he finished as an A team scorer in each of the last two races – something that appeared out of reach at the beginning of the season.

Keith Hawkes also deserves credit for ensuring that he finished out of the A team in the last race so that he could share the glory of the B teams success. Being an Aston Villa supporter he doesn't come across success very often so we will forgive him this time.

It was also good to see new members make their debut in the last race and their approach to suitable footwear makes interesting reading. Chris Hall sent out a begging letter to try and borrow a pair of size 9's and was inundated with offers (it just shows how desperate people are not to run!). On the other hand Darren Licence bought a new pair but didn't appreciate that lacing them up tightly was an important part of pre race preparation. As such the loss of one shoe at the first muddy patch was a lesson to be learnt for the future!

And as there is a little bit of space left – I'll end with a question. Who was the only runner who finished the season having scored points for each of the A, B **and** C teams?

Summary of AGM - Wednesday 21 February 2007

There were 38 members present, which compared favourably with 32 in 2006.

Before the meeting started, Chairman Paul Hawkins presented Allan Coldicott with an engraved trophy to mark his 25th year of membership. He was also given a club vest, and the news that his 2007/08 subscription would be paid for from club funds.

Chairman's Report

In his seventh such report, Paul Hawkins said it had been another great year for recruitment. The club had grown to the point that it is now the 15th largest in the West Midlands in terms of membership. Communication in the club had improved over the last few years, by press reports, newsletter and the web-site, so he would not repeat what most people already knew. The club had made progress in its range of sessions on offer, so in addition to the usual club night, there was circuit training, swim coaching and track sessions several times per week, all of which are subsidised in one way or another from club funds. Successes included:

- ◆ Men's T&F team promoted to Midland Second Division as Champions.
- ◆ Qualified for the National 12 Stage Road Relays for the first time last spring.
- ◆ Men's X-Country team came second in their league, a big improvement on last season. Women's team finished 8th in the Midlands and the women's vets team finished in the top three in three of the four fixtures.
- ◆ Junior cross country team had their best ever season with three athletes in the Warwickshire Schools team. This year four in the Warwickshire team plus two in the Gloucestershire team, alongside the county T&F team where four or more athletes are in the team.
- ◆ Large number of club records broken in the last year, both road and T&F.
- ◆ Triathlon section inspired by 'Ironman' Wayne had a good year.
- ◆ Juniors won Warwickshire Sportshall league for the 4th consecutive year
- ◆ Record 20 youngsters competed for Warwickshire at the Inter Regional Sportshall Athletic finals with 16 medals. The Warwickshire U15 Boys team, with almost all Stratford athletes went through to the UK National Finals at Birmingham Indoor Arena.

Paul thanked all the other members of the senior committee, Paul Bearman for his stewardship of the junior section, and the junior committee for their work.

Paul appealed for everyone to pay their subs promptly when Lesley sends out her subscription letters, explaining that of the £60 annual subs, £40 is for Sports Club membership, £3 to MCAA, (to England Athletics from April, rising to £5 in 2008), leaving SAC with just £17, which is used to subsidise the circuit training/swim coaching already mentioned, and pay for relay, team and league races, representing very good value.

Unless anyone wished to take over, Paul said he would continue as Chairman. The club had done well in the past year, thanks to everyone, but it could still get much better, whether that be competitively, looking after new or prospective members, or in any number of small ways. He thanked everyone for their continued support.

Treasurer's Report

Malcolm Higham referred to the accounts circulated. The healthy financial position had been maintained, with subscriptions relatively stable, increased income from NTR IX but Summer Six reduced (clashed with World Cup) and a decrease in donations. There was an increase in affiliation fees due to increased number of members and the figure included fees for races. In answer to a question about the amount in the current account, he pointed out that the amount of interest gained on deposit was not huge, but would review the situation. The accounts were accepted.

Election of Officers

Sarah Odell and Sarah Bland had volunteered their services to organise the Fun Run and Welcombe Cross respectively and they were duly elected, alongside all the other committee members that were continuing to serve.

Club Volunteers

Paul Hawkins made a further appeal for more Coaches and Officials for all club disciplines. For anyone interested, a good starting point would be a course on 31/3/07 at Coventry entitled 'Introduction to Fitness and Running'.

Debbie Cooper offered to take over from Yvonne Caswell as Social Secretary, and subsequently Rob Minton and Dawn Davies have agreed to be the men's and women's Hilly 100 Team Managers. Paul Johnson is considering the Fund Raising Co-ordinator role.

Awards Evening

Senior attendance had been disappointing, not helped by the date being brought forward a week, which had not given much time for the Shakespeare winners to be notified. Comments from the floor were very positive eg great evening, good to see youngsters getting awards, disco was a good idea, had enjoyed. From a show of hands, a majority of those at the AGM had attended the Awards, so it was not easy to assess why other members had not attended. Since the early days of using the Civic Hall, the presentation and format had improved enormously, so the general feeling was that the event should continue in its current form.

Shakespeare Competition

In 2004, the decision had been taken NOT to have races on Sundays due to the busy race schedule at week-ends, but some members had recently asked to re-consider this, to alleviate the monotony of races around Stratford in the winter months, but also to allow the NTR IX re-run to take place soon after the actual event. Others felt to have mid-week races was a way of making Wednesday night winter runs less tedious. After further discussion with members in favour of one or the other, a vote concluded that, as of next year, the one Shakespeare race to be on a Sunday would be the NTR IX Re-run.

At this point, the Chairman indicated the end of the formal business of the AGM as on the Agenda, and invited members to raise any other points for general discussion.

Club Races

Slower runners were concerned about getting isolated at the back on dark nights, particularly after the incident of a drunk trying to stop them in a race. A suggestion from the floor that a 'sweep' back marker should accompany each race, either on foot or by cycle, was felt to be an excellent suggestion, and although this couldn't be mandatory for every race, it would be included in the Race Organiser Guidelines. Consideration would be given as to whether this person would be eligible for the extra points as for race organisers.

Reflective Vests

There was concern that some members continued to ignore club advice and pure common sense that these should be worn on dark nights. This prompted wide ranging discussion, including the implications of any insurance claim being invalidated after an accident involving a club member not taking sensible precautions to be seen. It was unanimously agreed that the wearing of a reflective vest should be mandatory when running with the club. The kit co-ordinator would organise a supply of these available on club nights to be given out to club members without one, and also to any prospective members.

Cross-Country

There was wide ranging discussion and comments about various aspects. The ladies had enjoyed the support of the men's team at in those fixtures where both races had been at the same venue, and felt this should be reciprocated where possible. Questions were raised as to why the ladies' races were always much shorter than the men's, and why the x-country was always in the afternoon rather than morning? Much of this was down to long standing traditions and social reasons, but it didn't have to be that way. If anyone felt strongly enough, the club could make representations to the relevant governing bodies/committees/associations.

Track & Field

It was hoped more seniors would take part in the club championships (date 8/9/07), but the event needed greater publicity as some members may not be aware that it took place. Men's T&F had achieved success due to the junior men following through into the senior section, but this was not happening on the ladies side. The club did not have a strategy to improve matters, but the first hurdle was to get the current lady members to take part. Those senior men that had got involved thoroughly enjoyed taking part. The discussion concluded without any clear resolution, but the issue needed to be addressed in the revised Club Development Plan.

Thanks

In response to a vote of thanks, Chairmen Paul Hawkins and Paul Bearman received a warm round of applause for their work in putting the club in such a strong position.

20 THINGS THAT CIRCUIT TRAINING HAS TAUGHT ME

Rob Minton and Dawn Davies have very kindly organised a series of 10 circuit training sessions at KES on a Thursday evening (7 – 8). These have been running since Jan 25th, and will continue until March 29th, so if you fancy it then just turn up and give it a go (unless they've finished by now!). They are £3 per session and have been really well attended so far. So, what have I learnt?

1. It is an excellent way of strengthening all the important muscle areas, improving your all-round fitness and even sometimes having fun at the same time.
2. It is not possible to ride a bicycle or run when your backside feels like you are sitting on two thousand red-hot curling tongs. I initially discovered this during the 4 days following the first session. (Your body adjusts quickly, I promise you!)
3. Women are more co-ordinated than men.
4. My dining room table is more co-ordinated than Pete Walton and Brian Thornett – it is worth £3 just to sit in and watch those two.
5. Rob Minton may come across as a very pleasant, easy-going sort of person, but do not be fooled – he is evil and horrible. (024 7683 3478 – Dawn, this is the number for Coventry Social Services. They will re-house you and make sure that he never finds you. Get out now while you can.)
6. My arms lose all feeling after exactly 16 tricep dips, while my arse does the same after 3,500 lunges.
7. If you fancy a bit of a rest you can sometimes get away with using the old 'this exercise engages all the relevant muscle groups much better when done very slowly' trick. Not to be used more than once a fortnight or when Rob is within earshot.
8. Hula-hooping is rubbish and for girls.
9. Whatever muscles are required for reverse flys, they are not present in my body.
10. Rob can do lunges and squats until the cows come home, and certainly much longer than we all can, so winding him up halfway through them is not a great idea.
11. Pete Hill is very good at skipping.
12. The Vickers family are very good at everything (with parents like that, put some cash on their children representing England at something).
13. Allan Coldicott has some emergency energy reserves that enable his vocal cords to function however tired his body is.
14. As much as I like the Kaiser Chiefs they can only distract me only for a maximum of fifteen seconds on any one exercise (as can trying to think of my all-time favourite Villa team, what 'PNF' stands for again, what I've got for tea, what I would do if Phil Howell required the kiss of life, who present would be the best table-tennis player, etc).
15. Just because the instructor is smiling this doesn't mean that he is about to say something pleasant (in fact the opposite is usually true).
16. It is definitely possible to teach old dogs new tricks (apart from Pete Walton and Brian Thornett).
17. Never EVER choose to start at the lunges station, since this is also the first thing that you will have to do on the second circuit after the half-time torture. Encourage anyone doing the class for the first time that lunges is a good place to start.
18. Andy List did plenty of gym sessions when young, and it still shows!
19. It doesn't matter how warm and loose my hamstrings are, nature has deemed that my head and knees are never destined to meet.
20. Some things can only be learnt the painful way e.g. after the first week I now carefully ensure that my (vaguely) manly bits are well tucked in before lying on my stomach and enthusiastically starting dorsal raises.

Report on Tring to Town 2 (T2T2); Saturday 10th February

Tring to Town is a 45 mile ultra marathon that starts at the Rose and Crown Hotel, Tring and finishes at Little Venice, near Paddington. The course initially follows Station Road, heading east out of Tring, before joining the Grand Union Canal (GUC) after approximately one mile. From then the route follows the canal towpath, the only key navigation step being a left hand turn onto the Paddington arm of the GUC at approximately 31 miles. There are 5 Check Points situated at approximately 10, 20, 29, 32, 41 miles, all manned by enthusiastic support crew and stocked with an increasingly tempting selection of 'energy food' and water. It is organised by Ambition Events, a company run by Rory Coleman, and was first run in 2005 as an informal ultra for Marathon Des Sables preparation. Such was the popularity of the 2005 and subsequent 2006 events, the 2007 event was so well subscribed that it was necessary to organise two T2Ts this year; I just managed to get into T2T2.

The lead up to the 10th February T2T2 was eventful due to the snow conditions affecting the country on Thursday 8th February. The organisers notified all entrants that the race would go ahead regardless of the snow, and that competitors should come prepared to complete the event with minimal support, given the fact that Marshalls may not be able to access the canal towpath to set up Checkpoints. This meant more provisions in the rucksack and plenty of water and food.

Personally my build up to the event was disastrous. On the Thursday I spent many hours sledging with the children and managed to twist my ankle (bet I'm not the only one). On Friday I attempted to go to work in Malvern and was stuck in a blizzard for several hours. Then I developed a stinking cold.

Fortunately the snow turned to rain and I found myself at the Rose and Crown Hotel in Tring on the Saturday morning 'ready' to 'run' 45 miles.

The pre race atmosphere was very friendly with lots of familiar faces, and the conversation as usual centred around two subjects: the last event people had completed, and their latest injury. There was a pre race briefing in the car park, where runners were reminded about the left hand turn (a competitor from the January T2T had actually missed this and ended up in Brentford; they were competing a second time but were too embarrassed to be introduced). The male winner of the January T2T was introduced (05:53), back two weeks later to try to repeat his performance.

The race started at 08:15 in pouring rain and the field gradually spread out along the road section before reaching the turning onto the canal towpath, which felt like the real start to the race. As usual there were a number of stops to fumble around with gear but things quickly settled down. I class myself in the tortoise speed category and aim for consistency in a steady but slow speed; I've also entered the Grand Union Canal (GUCR) race (Birmingham to London) in May so this event was very much familiarisation for the route as it is the last 45 miles of the GUCR, plus practice for 'running' around 4-5 MPH for a long time.

The canal towpath is generally in good condition and has the advantage of appearing to be slightly downhill. Bridges and switches between left and right hand sides of the canal comprise the main 'hills' and it is fairly difficult to get lost. There are some nice scenic countryside stretches, fashionable marinas and waterside developments countered by some unappealing stretches such as under the M25! There are also lots of 'interesting – as in dodgy' canal boats to view, with the occasional water borne Tesco trolleys and fishermen's poles. In general everyone I met was pleasant and the camaraderie between fellow competitors and other runners and cyclists was great. The checkpoints were well stocked and the sole minor road crossing well marshalled, with runners being reminded of the road having completed considerable distances solely on the towpath.

Following the left hand turn for the Paddington arm the environment becomes a little less pleasant, especially through Acton, and runners are advised to pair up. The failing light, gas tanks and the levels of graffiti are a great incentive to speed up if at all possible and soon signs indicating single figure distances to Paddington appear and add more incentive. Suddenly the environment smartens up as Little Venice approaches, the canal boats are shiny and well kept, and a quick 'sprint' sees the end of 45 miles with a great reception from the organisers and other recently finished competitors. Changing facilities are minimal and the next challenge is getting from Paddington to Euston, train to Tring and a drive home.

The first male finished in 05:45, 2 minutes ahead of the T2T1 winner of 28/1/7 who bettered his time. The first lady finished in 05:58 (a Runners World employee). Several veteran competitors set excellent times and were well ahead of me. See AmbitionEvents.com for the full results*. Needless to say I've already entered for 2008. T2T is a very friendly and relaxed event and highly recommended as an ultra.

Kim Johnston

*Editors Note – Kim finished 51st in a time of 9 hours 55 mins.

56 dead over 12k on my 49th on the 28th

A report on the NTR 9 by Steve Hemmings - Hart Road Runners - Fleet

I've known Lesley & Steve Kirk since 11th September 2001. My wife Sue and I met them at Bogota airport. The more observant of you will recognise that date as not exactly the best date in history to be flying, but it's a date I will always remember.

My 49th birthday is on January 28th - the same day as this year's Not the Roman 9. I'd always fancied running an event on my birthday so here was the perfect opportunity.

I run for a club called The Hart Roadrunners in Fleet in North Hampshire. Fleet (not our club) host a highly regarded Pre London Half Marathon in March - some of you may have run it.

Lesley had kept a number for me; I didn't see it until the morning of the run as we ate breakfast with the Kirks. It was number 1 - not at all due to my position as an elite athlete I hasten to add.

I was hoping to finish the 12km event within the hour so. Despite my elite status with race number 1, I was not a threat to the likes of Haile Gebrselassie if Stratford upon Avon AC had persuaded him to run as part of his London Marathon preparation. Lesley had driven me round the route the night before so I knew what to expect. I was looking forward to it.

Lesley had carefully prepared a perfect carbo loaded meal the night before - Steak pie, mashed potatoes, rhubarb crumble and custard. After a beer and a glass of wine I was fully race prepared. Do you know I felt like I could beat 55 minutes!!

On race morning, after opening a few birthday cards and eating jam on toast for energy. Steve and I with Sue headed off on the short walk to the race HQ at FISSC - The Sports Club of NFUMutual. Steve had got a last minute club entry to race. Lesley was already making herself busy as one of the event organisers.

I couldn't resist buying a race "hoody" with all the competitors names on the back - what a brilliant idea. Sue took a few photos of birthday boy. Then Steve and I set off for a warm up. I got a few comments and looks as I proudly paraded in my Race number 1 under the oak tree ready for the start. The weather was bright and cloudless. Perfect.

As is traditional with Steve at races we have done together before, he wandered off somewhere so I didn't see him start or know where he was. Actually that's not quite true. I knew he was definitely in front of me somewhere!!

We set off along a narrow country lane, well used by farm vehicles, there where a few bottle necks but I managed to get past a number of people. At around 1.5km we headed along a main road for the next 3km or so. I was feeling quite good. I can't remember, but I'm sure I tucked in behind a ladies bottom to help me along as that is what most men do, isn't it ? (or is that just me ?!!) There was a bit of an incline at around the 4km mark that I had remembered from yesterday's reeve, but it didn't cause me any problems.

I was enjoying the run. It was my birthday and I was doing one of the things I love doing. We turned off the main road, still keeping to the rural route. At around half way was a welcome drink station immediately followed by a not so welcome hill as we headed up and over the downs in the direction of Loxley village. I was still feeling ok and even got chatting to a guy who was running his first event. He noticed my race number. I told him not to be fooled by it. It was my birthday you know!. I made up my mind that I needed to beat this "fresher". The day was clear and the countryside was a nice place to be running.

After the village the road continues in a straight line for 3km heading back to where we started at Tiddington, where there is a little bit of a sting in the tail towards the end, by way of a steady climb. "Fresher" was ahead of me but as we headed back down Knights lane for the final kilometre I managed to get past him again. I crossed the line in 56 minutes exactly. I was greeted with a "Happy birthday" and a spot prize of some elastic laces. Lesley was on the finish line as well. Steve finished in an excellent 48 minutes or so.

We hung around for cups of tea and the prize giving. Met up with Sue and we headed back to spend the remainder of a brilliant 49th birthday with Lesley and Steve. Lesley and Steve had bought me an event T Shirt to compliment my hooded top

Thanks to all involved at Stratford upon Avon AC, for a lovely, well organised run and thanks again for the birthday present as I crossed the finish line. That was a very nice touch. I might even run it again next year.

Warwickshire Road Race League (WRRL)

Last year although we did have some good individual performances in the WRRL we never quite managed the consistency or numbers over the full season to trouble the presenters at the Awards Ceremony.

It would be good if this year was different!

Here are this years races that will make up the 2007 WRRL.

Sat 24 th March	Warks Road Relays – Sutton Park (Teams Only)
Sun 3 rd June	Northbrook 10km – WCAA champs
Wed 27 th June (TBC)	NP Aerospace Godiva Midsummer 5 mile – WCAA champs
Sat 7 th July	Stratford Summer 6 mile
Thu 12 th July	Rowheath 5km – WCAA champs
Fri 31 st August	Godiva Memorial Park 5 mile
Sun 9 th September	Nuneaton 10 mile – WCAA champs
Sun 7 th October	Kenilworth half-marathon
Sun 14 th October	Rugby 10 mile

It's a Dog's Life

For those of us with dogs you'll know that the occasional lost or chewed shoe is just something you have to put up with. If we're lucky the dog will be happy with something old if we're unlucky

Mark Francis recently 'lost' his new Garmin watch as the fascination of new technology proved too much for Blue – his energetic and youthful Boxer dog. Quite how Blue managed to get hold of the watch and what he did to it to destroy it we will never know – but what we do know is that it took him 2.4 secs and his heartrate was 175bpm whilst he was doing it!!

Spam Filters

Most of you will now be familiar with my regular e mails advertising the Sunday Morning Long Run. Despite various problems with my address book I seem to get very few 'bounce' notifications. (i.e. e mail undelivered) However for some reason I have particular problems with Malcolm Higham to the extent that I regularly query whether his e mail is working. 'Yes definitely' is always the reply. Having sent separate e mails to test the connections I have now narrowed the problem down which culminated in the following exchange.

Malcolm - Just testing - I'm still having messages to you being returned for some reason Tony

[Received this one Tony](#)

Looks like it is just the invites to the Long Sunday Runs that are being rejected - you haven't got a special filter have you?!

[Yeah want one?](#)

[If anyone is interested \(surely not!\) contact Malcolm direct!!](#)

Website

We have just received some statistics regarding usage of the club website during 2006. There are various measures available (visits, pages, hits etc) but rather than bore you with all the detail I thought I would share with you the number of unique visitors every month. We have about 300 members (Senior and Junior) and in the lowest month we still had 365 unique visitors i.e. equivalent of every member of the club going onto the site plus 65 others (e.g. potential new members). At our 'peak' in January we had over 900 visitors (primarily runners in the NTRIX accessing the results).

The website has come a long way in a short time and the statistics confirm what a good source of information it provides both for members and 'external visitors'.

You can find us at www.stratfordac.co.uk