

Wimborne A.C. Road Runners – January 2007

Happy new year, we head into 2007 on something of a high. Well done to Tim Harris who completed marathon distance on seven continents in seven weeks - his 'Seven Deadly Marathons' - then after a *two day* break he did a 100k race in extreme conditions (*much more of this later*). His efforts were thwarted slightly by the late cancellation of the Alexandria Marathon (Tim covered the distance in Egypt, but not in an official race), so he is going to do the Marrakech Marathon in Morocco on 28th January so that he will hold a record recognised by the *Guinness Book of Records*. Tim's story has attracted a good deal of media interest and he has appeared on both *South Today* and *Meridian Tonight* since his return from the Antarctic. With his exploits of the past few months and on completion of the Marrakech Marathon he will hold the record for the following:

- 7 Marathons on 7 Continents in the least number of days (officially 92 days, unofficially 49 days)
- Youngest person (23 years) to complete 7 marathons on 7 continents
- If Tim can complete Marrakech in under 4:45 he will have the fastest accumulative time for 7 marathons on 7 continents
- First ever Briton to complete the 100k Antarctic race
- * Youngest runner ever to finish the Antarctic 100k race

We have also had our most successful 'Wimborne 10' ever – a study of Jerry's Race Director's Report (*see later*) makes it absolutely clear what a great collective effort is required from 'Team Wimborne' to put on a successful race. Plus there have also been a lot of new faces in the last three months on the roadrunning/cross-country scene, so welcome to (in no particular order) Julie (Jools) Maskell, Tim Box, Paul Grist, Alex Wheeler, Paul & Sharon, Kelly, Michele Whitehurst, Julie Gosling and Tina King – forgive me if I have missed anyone out. A few of these hardly seem like new faces at all as they have been so active in the past 3 months. Jools, Emma Richards, Annemarie Fachiri, Tim Box, Michele and Julie Gosling have all run their first races for the club. Jools was first Wimborne lady home in her first race for the club. Alex has put in a couple of flying performances in the time trial and is the current holder of the Time Trial Trophy. It is also great to see the return from injury of Sue Harrogate and Helen Allen. Helen, complete with her red and black 'go faster' stripes in her hair, has bagged a couple of PBs in that time (for 10m and half-marathon). We also look forward to seeing more of Eric Gilbert in 2007, his excellent league form of 2005 was followed by a year plagued with injury in 2006, while Richard Atkins is making good progress in recovering his true form.

Boosted by the influx of new faces we have broken a record set earlier this year at the 'Purbeck 10' for the most WAC roadrunners in a single road race. We had 27 runners at Christchurch Christmas Pudding 10k on 10th December. This is even more remarkable because we had four people; Jon, Craig, Kim and Jeannie all taking Level One coaching courses that day at Bournemouth University and there was also WACers at the Dorset Cross-Country Championship at Lulworth Castle. There was also an excellent turnout at the first league race of 2007, the Broadstone Quarter Marathon with much vocal support.

WAC 2006 AWARDS EVENING – There were some 60+ WAC members at the Awards night at the Allendale Centre. Awards were made to the *Top WAC Male Roadrunner* – Steve Guy and *Top Female Roadrunner* – Julie Mead, these were awarded based on their results over the 12 Dorset League races. This year's *Top Marathon Runner* went to Simon Mortimer for the second successive year, in only his second marathon (London in April) he improved on his previous time – his PB now stands at 2:47:57, the fastest marathon time set by a WAC runner in 2006. The final dedicated roadrunners award is the *Roadmaster Trophy*. This trophy is awarded to someone who has clocked up significant mileage in a club vest. This year's Roadmaster Trophy was awarded to Wendy Kennedy who has won Fidelity Awards from the Dorset League for 2005 and 2006 and currently has the longest unbroken sequence of league race finishes (23) of any WAC runner. On the Track & Field side, Tim Harris was awarded the *Senior Men's Trophy* for all the hard work he put in earlier in the year both as an athlete and team manager – he was of course unable to collect his trophy as he was in the midst of his 'Seven Deadly Marathons' at the time . (*A full list of Trophy winners for the Athletics/Track & Field side of the club can be found on the website.*)

Finally there was the presentation of the *Les Phillips Memorial Trophy*. This is awarded to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the life of the club. This year's winner is Jerry Shield. Jerry has been a key member of the club for the thick end of a decade. He is the WAC roadrunners' representative on the committee of the Dorset League and also represents the roadrunners on the WAC Committee. Jerry established the roadrunners' newsletter and in the past year has redesigned the club's website and sees that it is kept updated. The outstanding success we saw this year of the 'Wimborne 10' (*see report later*) is largely down to the hard work he has put in over many years. Have I forgotten anything, quite probably. The award is richly deserved and long overdue.

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LONDON MARATHON PLACES 2007 – This year's Roadrunners Christmas Party was a runaway success (pardon the pun). The food at Primizia was superb and here also numbers dramatically increased (44 in 2006 from 28 in 2005). As usual the draw for London Marathon club places was made on the night. There were three club places to be won. For the first time we loaded the draw so that the more races you did in the RRL and WXC, the greater your chances of winning a club place. So if you want to improve your chances in 2007 you will need to pack in those league races. The draw winners this time were Wendy Kennedy, Richard Atkins and Guy Miller. First reserve was Selwyn Richards and second reserve Linda Eldred. Now it's time to plan out your training schedule and get stuck in. These are the WAC runners in the London Marathon for 2007 that I am aware of:

Helen Allen	Richard Atkins	Nigel Eldred	John Guy
Andy Horsley	Ian Kennedy	Wendy Kennedy	Adee Mead
Guy Miller	Simon Mortimer	Cora Quinn	Jerry Shield
Nick Solomon	Raj Witt		

Reserves Selwyn Richards Linda Eldred

For these runners the upcoming 20 mile 'March Hare' race at Christchurch on 4 March is an absolute 'must do', it is also a League Race. The 'March Hare' is dead flat and extremely well-organised. It is hard to imagine a better pre-London Marathon race in your build-up anywhere in the country, and we are lucky that it is on our doorstep – the date, the distance and the course are all perfect. It is a race that fills up very quickly once runners have notification of whether they have been accepted into the London Marathon. At the moment there are still some places available in the 'March Hare', you need to enter this race NOW! Sent out with e-mailed versions of this newsletter is an attachment for the 'March Hare' entry form.

21 JANUARY WIMBORNE 10 TIME TRIAL - Pamphill Green 10.00am-

Our annual club run of the 'Wimborne 10' which gives those who were involved in the marshalling, etc. on the day a chance to the run the course, and those who ran in the race the chance to beat their race time.

WESSEX LEAGUE CROSS-COUNTRY NEWS

WAC Ladies take first place at Devizes

As reported in the *Echo*, well done to Jill Harsent, Kim Jolliffe and Julie Mead who took first place for the V40 Ladies at Race 3 - Devizes. (We are still awaiting full official results.) This race was the first fixture where we have managed to field a full team (3 runners required) in this category. It was a solid team performance with little in the way of placings and time between them. I want to build on this now – to register a team score at the end of the season we need to score team points in 4 of the 6 races. This means that we have to field at least a 3-woman V40 team in all three remaining fixtures. Dare we dream of taking the top spot at the end of the season (we finished 2nd in this category last year). V40 Ladies if we are going to do it we need your support. The race was the usual comic mudfest – it seems that the tougher the course, the better we do. It really was Ladies' Day there, with pretty well all the junior girls also having season's best and probably in a few instances best ever runs. We even had an individual first with Alexandra Vaughan-Johncey first under-11 girl. The fellas did OK to, Tim Shakespeare's fantastic form this season continued and Richard Atkins' form also continues to improve. We are now at the halfway stage in the season and at each race we have had a bigger turnout than the race before. At Devizes Julie made her first appearance of the season (and what a difference it made) as did Phil Burgess. Apart from those already mentioned, the other big contributors for the seniors in the season so far are Graham Whiffen and Steve Snook (who have both been ever-presents). Thank you for your support, we hope to suck a few more roadrunners into the stinking bog that is cross-country running before the season is out! The remaining fixtures are:

Race 4:7th Jan, Bicton, Exmouth Race 5:18th Feb, TBA Race 6:18th Mar, Ferndown

For more details of times/venues or anything else to do with cross-country please phone me on 01202-577081 or email ian@wimborne10.co.uk

As mentioned in passing earlier, the club now has four new Level One coaches – Jon Braund, Craig Dixon, Kim Jolliffe and Jeannie Puckeridge. Thanks very much to them for the terrific commitment they are putting in. All four of them are doing sterling work on **Saturday mornings (10am at QE)** working with the cross-country training group. This group is largely geared to our juniors but if you would like to come along and join in we would be delighted to see you. We tend to run a maximum distance of about 4 miles.

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HANDICAP TIME TRIALS

The time trials in the last quarter have used the Willett Arms route. We have never had a 3-month period where we have had more people take part, and December's total of 14 time trialists is the largest number we have recorded for any single time trial. There has been a particularly good effort from our new faces. The time trials have become a little bit of a victim of their own success. Keeping tabs on half a dozen runners each writing down their own times is relatively straightforward but when this number is more than doubled it becomes more problematical. One problem we have had is when we have some runners writing down their actual time, while others have written down their handicapped time – it is not always obvious which are which. Trying to sort the paperwork the morning after the night before can be a bit of a minefield! I am certain that the record of the November time trial is incomplete – I am fairly sure that there are a couple of names missing from it (I think that Graham, Phil, Neil, Nick, Paul Grist and possibly Selwyn may all have been there – apologies to all of you). I believe that Jerry's time that night may actually be a course record. What we could do with is a volunteer each month whose job it is to act solely as timekeeper – the time trial is such a useful session we want to try and avoid denying anyone the opportunity to take part, so the best solution would be if we had someone who was unable to run (perhaps because they are nursing an injury) – please step forward if this is you. Whatever your level of ability, these time trials (which take place the second Thursday of each month) are absolutely key in helping us to find some extra pace.

October

Position	Name	Handicap	Actual time	Handicap time
1	Jools Maskell	2.5 mins	33:30	36:00
2	Phil Burgess	8.5 mins	28:08	36:38
3	Graham Whiffen	8.5 mins	28:10	36:40
4	Julie Mead	2.5 mins	34:30	37:00
5	Ian Kennedy	6.5 mins	30:53	37:23
6	Barbara Frampton	0 mins	37:45	37:45
7	Annemarie Fachiri	0 mins	37:48	37:48
8	Sue Harrogate	3.5 mins	35:00	38:30
9	Guy Miller	3 mins	37:32	40:42
10	Jackie Suffolk	0 mins	45:16	45:16

November

Position	Name	Handicap	Actual time	Handicap time
1	Sue Harrogate	0 mins	34:11	34:11
2	Tim Box	0 mins	34:16	34:16
3	Jerry Shield	10 mins	24:55	34:55
4	Alex Wheeler	7 mins	28:07	35:07
5	Derek Evans	10 mins	25:25	35:25
6	Ian Kennedy	7 mins	30:16	37:16
7	Annemarie Fachiri	0 mins	37:35	37:35
8	Barbara Frampton	0 mins	37:37	37:37
9	Jill Harsent	1.5 mins	36:16	37:46
10	Bob Caines	4 mins	34:22	38:22
11	Norman Frampton	0 mins	40:19	40:19

December

Position	Name	Handicap	Actual time	Handicap time
1	Alex Wheeler	8 mins	27:11	35:11
2	Graham Whiffen	9 mins	27:30	36:30
3	Jon Braund	8 mins	28:35	36:35
4	Ian Kennedy	6 mins	30:48	36:48
5	Phil Burgess	9 mins	27:59	36:59
5	Kim Jolliffe	4 mins	32:59	36:59
7	Nick Solomon	8 mins	29:22	37:22
8	Annemarie Fachiri	0 mins	37:29	37:29
9	Sue Harrogate	3 mins	34:30	37:30
10	Julie Mead	3 mins	34:45	37:45
11	Guy Miller	0 mins	38:10	38:10
12	Kelly	4 mins	34:40	38:40
12	Paul	4 mins	34:40	38:40
14	Sharon	1 min	41:10	42:10

Keep on runnin', Ian

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WIMBORNE 10 – RACE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The ninth Wimborne 10 was the biggest and best yet. We had 542 entries and 482 finishers – more than a hundred up on the previous highest. Clearly word of the free tea and cakes has spread. In fact if you look at the *Runners World* website the cakes get more comments than anything else so a huge thanks to Barb, Ellen and Morag for all the organisation and effort that they have put into that.

Last year we had a scrutineer representing the SEAA, who provide us with the race permit, who came along to check that we were doing everything correctly. One of his comments was that we shouldn't finish the race on a road – unless the road was closed to traffic. That meant moving the end. So with help from Stewart Little we settled on the Green in front of Pamphill School. It also meant Stewart had to re-measure the course – thank you Stewart. It didn't make sense to leave everything else at the little car park next to the school so we moved it all to the Green. This created a lovely atmosphere at the end, although I suspect everyone was too busy there to actually take it in. Another change we made, based on the scrutineer's feedback, this year was to man that baggage tent – or woman it. Jill Harsent looked after this but I think had seven helpers at one point just before the start of the race – thank you Jill. One thing we've always struggled with is the fact that the race has two centres – QE for late-entries, showers and the presentations and Pamphill where the race actually starts and finishes and where we provide water/squash and more recently the legendary tea and cakes. Brian Lincoln has always done our results. This is a really fundamental job in terms of the whole organisation and Brian has it down to a tee – thank you very much Brian. For the last six years Brian has been situated at QE and we've had our own runners taking results from Pamphill to him.

This has often caused problems – more so as we get more and more runners - so this year we moved Brian to The Vine (before the bar opened!) and had the much shorter trip to and from there to get the results on to the computer. Thanks to Phil Burgess for organising this and for ferrying the results slips to Brian and to The Vine. The race itself starts months before. We have a very decent website – thanks again to Brian - with entry forms and all the previous year's results as well as a few photos. We received our first entry about 11 months before the race. Graham Starmer and Nicky look after all the entries – thanks very much to them both. Over 400 people entered before the day so they were kept very busy. We also had to decide on a memento – thanks to Ian Kennedy for designing and organising the mugs. Ian also did the flyer that we sent out with the race numbers and arranged the sponsorship that we received from the Top Trainers store in Bournemouth. There was also letters to write – the emergency services - Police, Fire and Ambulance, QE school, QELC, National Trust, Local Authority, forms to fill in, arranging First Aid cover, doing a risk assessment, a medical assessment, distributing entry forms, advertising the race (on *Runners World* for instance), cakes to bake – the list goes on and on. Then a week or so before the race we put signs up around the course and deliver letters to the locals to warn them that they are about to be descended on. Thanks to Jill and her helpers for that. We put the actual route signs up on the morning of the event – that way we know that they won't be tampered with – but the day before is a busy day loading up Norm's van with all the necessary stuff – thanks again Ian. Then at 7am on the big day we meet at Pamphill. This year I think there were 9 of us, although we have decided we need more next year. Ian, Andy and Derek S went out and put the signs up while the rest of us (Stewart, Jill, Julie, Glynn, Barb and myself) stayed at Pamphill to sort stuff out there. Around 8am Julie headed off to QE to open up the late entries desk. Sheilagh and Morag joined her there. As the runners arrive Adele attempts to guide them to a parking space. There are over 400 spaces at QE but they were all taken. Around 9 to 9:30 all the other helpers turned up – Lee, Mike, Tim B, Craig, Jon, Peter, Neil and Jill and Tom, Simon, Norm, Jacqui, Michele and Jessica, Jacqui and Charlotte, John, Louise, Mike and Betty, Richard, Sue, Maggie and Will, Mary, Johnny and Debbie, Bob and Derek E and everyone had a job to do. Once the race was started by the town crier and two musket men at 10:30 those of us at Pamphill had a slight breather, whilst it no doubt got busy for those on the course, but from 11:30 onwards it soon became mayhem. The finishers peaked in the 70-75 minute gap with 74 runners finishing in 5 minutes. On the drinks table we just couldn't fill the water cups quickly enough. Once all the runners were in we did the awards back at QE. The winner was Nigel Leighton from Bristol & West in 52:41. Nigel was the 22nd overall and 4th Brit at the London Marathon 2006. First lady was Lynda Faulkner from the Dorset Doodlers in 63:32. First male and female teams were Poole Runners. Meanwhile the course signs and all the tents and other paraphernalia was being taken down back at Pamphill, loaded back onto Norm's van – and then returned to wherever – which kept quite a few busy for most of the afternoon.

All in all it was and is an incredibly rewarding experience. This year's was definitely the best ever I felt – although in our post-race discussion we decided there is still plenty of things we could do better. As I've tried to point out here, there were a lot of people involved and a big **Thank You** to you all (and a very big apology if I've missed your name out - I've lost my list) but in fact we could do with even more – particularly if we are going to get those kind of numbers again. 2007 is a Dorset League race again and is the tenth Wimborne 10. I've never run it before – so I want to have a go myself this time! We have already decided to once again donate all the 2007 profits to the Lymphoma Association as we did in 2001 and 2002. The race is on November 18th 2007. I already have a to-do list!

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DORSET ROAD RACE LEAGUE ROUND-UP

By far and away the most significant thing to mention about the 2006 league is that we had FIVE fidelity winners this time around. If you don't already know, the fidelity award is given to anyone who manages to compete all the league races during the year. Previously that has meant 10 races but this year it was increased to 12. Those five were Nick Solomon, Steve Guy, Julie Mead, Denise Craddock and Wendy Kennedy. Wendy also did the Fidelity in 2005 as well. By my reckoning there were only 15 in the county who managed this achievement. Our final league positions were a little disappointing – sixth for the men (third last year) and ninth for the ladies (ninth last year also) but encouragingly we had more runners than ever representing the club over the year – a total of 44 different people and we got a full team out for every race (5 men and 3 ladies). We were somewhat cursed for the year with injuries and never quite managed to get our best team out. Of our top 3 runners I think we only had one running in 11 of the 12 events and on the other occasion we only had 2. Hopefully a bit of good luck and returns from injuries will figure in 2007. Top WAC lady was Julie Mead and I was top man (thanks to Stewart getting injured with 2 races to go). These positions are based on the best 7 results – so if you want to be in with a chance you need to make sure you run at least 7 races next year. I haven't seen the league results yet from the Broadstone Quarter but we had a great turnout – 14 men and 6 ladies (20 in all out of 176 = more than 10% of the total finishers) and I think the men's team may have come third. This year's league will once again include Poole AC who withdrew in 2005 so that's going to make it harder but is good news overall for the county.

Jerry

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SEVEN DEADLY MARATHONS!!!!!!! – What an adventure! When deciding upon completing seven marathons on seven continents in seven weeks I expected it was going to be exciting, challenging and tiring but the actual experience was beyond any expectations. It all started in late October with the Mountain Marathon in Patagonia, Argentina. Running up steep inclines, through rivers and bogs, I completed the course in 4 hours 45 minutes and then flew to Cairo. I was entered to run the Alexandria marathon in Egypt at this time, however, this was cancelled just weeks before I left, so I decided to run a 26 mile course anyway. Myself and a friend ran alongside the River Nile as far as we could until we ran into trouble, so turned around and ran on the other side of the river. We suffered with diarrhoea and sickness during the run (maybe something we drank) but completed the run in 3 hours 45 minutes. Following Cairo I flew to Fielding in New Zealand, Palermo in Italy, then Seattle in the US. These marathons being in the middle of the seven were mentally difficult, as I had to remember to hold back, as I still had a few more marathons to go. I ran 3 hours 40 minutes, 3 hours 51 minutes and 3 hours 57 minutes for those three marathons and found that I struggled not having anyone to help me recover after the races. In Singapore for marathon six however, I had met with my brother and his girlfriend who helped me prepare and recover for this race. The humidity was incredible as expected and after just a mile I was dripping with sweat and it was only 6am. Feeling exhausted I finished the 26.2 miles in 4 hours 42 minutes.

Finally I travelled to the Antarctic for the Ice Marathon. The Antarctic alone was an amazing experience. I stayed at the Patriot Hills camp in the inner Antarctic Circle, 600km from the South Pole. We ran the Marathon in -10 to -20 degrees, and with nothing but snow and ice under foot it was like running on sand. I found the first 15 miles enjoyable but really started to struggle with 11 miles to go. I was in second place for the majority of the race but couldn't gain on the leader, Henri from France. He finished in 5 hours 8 mins and I came in 7 minutes later in 2nd place in a time of 5 hours 15 minutes. Thirteen started the race and nine finished. I was then in my sleeping bag for the next three hours shivering and desperately trying to get warm. A day later after a little sleep, some good food and a bit of a stretch I decided that I would run the 100km race which was due off in the morning. I really didn't think I would be able to complete it but there isn't that much to do in the Antarctic so I thought I would go off and see what I could do. 17 hours and 16 minutes later I crossed the finish line becoming the first Englishman and youngest person to complete that distance in the Antarctic.

I made it back home just in time for Christmas, and importantly Christmas dinner. A big thank you to everyone who has supported me and the charity WaterAid. For more information, photos and video footage please have a look at my website, www.sevendeadlymarathons.com. I look forward to a quieter 2007! Happy New Year.

Tim H

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RACE REPORTS

Dartmoor Vale Marathon – October 15th – This was Andy's idea. Neither of us had been particularly happy with New Forest and this fitted nicely into an empty weekend two weeks after Clarendon and two weeks before Beachy Head. In total it meant 4 marathons in 6 weeks. Personally after each marathon I was spending a week trying to get my legs back in some kind of respectable shape by lots of recovery work (bike and treadmill) before resting for most of the second week for the race. Anyway, the Dartmoor race is a fairly new event – this was the fourth time it had been held. It was originally in the summer but common sense, I think, moved it to the autumn. It meant an early start. The race starts at 9:15. Andy picked me up at 6am but with little traffic at that time we were there in less than 2 hours. The race HQ, start and finish was Newton Abbott racecourse which was excellent although sadly lacking showers so I hate to think what Andy's car smelt like afterwards. The event consisted of a 10k (245 runners), a half-marathon (298 runners) and a (2 lap) full marathon (78 runners). The start was staggered so the marathon runners were the best part of a mile behind the half marathon runners. We started with a loop of the racecourse and then headed out up the valley. The first lap was mentally quite easy as we were constantly overtaking the slower half marathon runners but as we came to the end of the first lap it was a different story. I was running by myself now. I soon discovered from a marshal that I was seventh at that stage but I could hear from the support from the spectators that, local girl, Heather Foundling-Hawker was just behind me. Heather came second overall at the New Forest Marathon so that gave me some motivation to keep going. Pretty soon I caught sight of the runner in sixth place and spent the next couple of miles trying to catch him and then I had my sights on fifth place. At around 21 miles I took fifth place but not longer afterwards Heather caught me. We ran together for about 3 miles. My ego took a knock when I found out that whilst I was giving it everything she was having a recovery run having competed in the World 100K championships the previous weekend in Korea. In the end I couldn't keep up with her and Heather went on ahead beating me by a minute. Still I couldn't complain - sixth place overall, fifth male in 3:03:29. Andy came in 33rd in 3:38:43 although I missed him finishing as I was too busy getting a nice hot cup of tea. Overall I thoroughly recommend the race. Despite being in Dartmoor it is really rather flat. The organisation was excellent and the combination of different distances makes it a good choice for a group – maybe a big group of WACers. The Dartmoor Vale 2007 is booked for 21st October 2007. Jerry

Great South Run 10m – 22nd October – Thought I'd given myself plenty of time to get onto Southsea Common but everybody else had the same idea and we ended up in a queue for a good half hour. I was in the first wave of runners and 10 seconds into the race the heavens opened big time and the wind increased, and it continued that way. The onshore winds along the seafront became very difficult. My one aim was to get in the top 10 (age 60), but when I saw my time at the finish (92:14) I thought I had no chance, but at least I had come in at the same time as Sally Taylor's team off *South Today*. I was pleasantly surprised to find I'd actually come 6th in my age group – I'm happy with that. I would definitely recommend that you don't take a small car on a wet day because trying to get stripped off inside was a nightmare. The windows misted up and I ended up with my feet on the windscreen. Needless to say I had some very strange looks from people passing! No cakes or tea, but a nice medal and T-shirt that fits! Barb

Beachy Head Marathon – 28th October – I stood on the start line staring at the first climb thinking, What am I doing here? How did I allow this to happen? I know the answer, it was that Jill Harsent's fault! Jill, along with Louise, Jerry and Andy all entered this race much earlier in the year - and then she went and booked a holiday. In early September she asked me if I wanted her place and then kept badgering me about it. At the time I had been running for about 2 weeks after being out injured with a calf problem since May. I had recently managed to get round 'The Beast' but had run very few miles since the London Marathon in April. Jerry had told me that the off-road Beachy Head Marathon wasn't like a 'normal' marathon and that I should allow an extra hour onto my expected time – I wasn't sure that I could deal with a 'normal' marathon let alone more than that (I had Googled and found a reference that said that Beachy Head Marathon had twice the ascent of the Snowdonia Marathon!). I kept putting off the decision about whether to run or not, but three weeks before race day I managed a decent (but flat) 17/18 mile training run which I did at a consistent (if not quick) pace. I decided to go for it. The following week was my last chance to get one more long run in, and a chance to give my confidence a much-needed boost – the route I went for was just over 22 miles. Running past QE at about 17/18 miles I knew I was struggling, running on empty and out of water. I was in poor shape but got to Magna Road (21 miles) where I dropped my water bottle, a friend driving by saw me scrambling about on the verge trying to pick it up. He stopped, asked if I was OK, and then asked if I needed a lift, I decided I did! So much for the confidence boost! Back to race day.

It had been an early start, 5.45am from Andy's, and now we were on Eastbourne's windswept seafront. The race has a maximum entry of over 1,700, and entries are divided into runners (sub-5 hrs), joggers (sub-7 hrs) and walkers (sub-9hrs). Jerry and Andy had entered as 'runners' while Louise and Jill were entered as

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'joggers'. I didn't much like the idea of being considered a 'jogger', but bearing in mind Jerry's 'add 1 hour' comment that was probably the right category. In the car, I was 'travelling hopefully' rather than with too much optimism, spirits all round were high though, with the right amount of nervous tension that can help you find something extra on the big day. I dreamed of cracking 5 hours but was desperate that whatever happened I came in inside 6 hours (when the timekeepers pack up and go home!).

Back to the start line, the starter's pistol is fired and the mass start is off. We travel all of about 50metres of tarmac road before we are off-road and climbing a monster hill (perhaps 45°). This first climb left us in no doubt of what was in store for us. I had decided that the best strategy on the steepest climbs would be to march up and start running once the summit had been reached. After about 1 km the really steep section came to an end and, for me, the running started, up a long slow drag for the next 3 miles. Jerry and Andy had actually run that first section and were some way in front. The gradient profile looks like a rollercoaster and a series of descents and climbs followed. The vocal support we got out on the course in the form of Mary and Michael was very much appreciated. At mile 19 I was on the flattest part of the route as we followed the River Cuckmere down to the coast and Seven Sisters Country Park. Anyone who has done a marathon will know that the toughest part of the race is the final 6 miles (where you may encounter the dreaded 'wall' – feeling fine at 18 miles, but totally spent at 22). The gradient profile from 19.5 miles onwards looked like your worst nightmare, nine serious climbs including the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head itself. The Seven Sisters present some challenge, especially when you have 20 miles in your legs. They all fall in a three-mile section, a couple of the 'Sisters' have to be scrambled up – running, or even walking would be impossible. Having cleared the final 'Sister' we are virtually at sea level again at Birling Gap (22m) and the final checkpoint. I saw Mary and Michael who were still shouting words of encouragement prior to the last two climbs. The next mile was relatively flat, the road runs parallel with the footpath here and Mary was cycling alongside me, lying through her teeth about how strong I looked! The final climb (Beachy Head) starts at around 24m and continues for one mile, it is runnable but I am running then walking, running then walking. I look at my watch, a sub-5 hour time is still a possibility, I need to push on. The steepest part of the climb is reached, I get it into my head that if I can do the final 1.5 miles in sub-8 minutes (this seems unlikely) I can get in under 5 hours. On breaching that final summit it is 'eyeballs out' all the way to the finish. Crossing the line I looked at my watch, 4:55, I must have miscalculated somewhere! I finish 470th. Jerry and Andy have been in for a while and both recorded great times, finishing 67th in 3:55 and 165th in 4:13 respectively. Like me, Louise was desperate to finish before the timekeepers quit at 6 hours, she managed it very comfortably and finished 679th in 5:28.

Post-race we were buzzing – all four of us had achieved as much as we dared hope for. Having done what I saw described in one blog as 'the toughest marathon in the UK' on minimal training it is a big boost for my aspirations to do the Lairig Ghru, the 28 mile fell race over the Cairngorms in June 2007. I am grateful to Jill for bullying me into this, it is one of those special races which, having done it, will be penciled in the diary for years to come. For Jerry and Andy they have targeted bigger things for 2007. As Beachy Head Marathon takes place on a Saturday it offers a rare opportunity to run 3 marathons in 3 days – Beachy Head, Snowdonia and Dublin. Who in their right mind would want to do that? Whether of sound mind or not, Jerry and Andy are up for it and Louise has asked me if I fancy *just* doing Beachy Head and Snowdonia. What are these people like! Personally, I think that one marathon in a weekend is enough for anybody! *lan*

AECC Dash Back 5k & 10k, Boscombe – 5th November – The new race to the local calendar, organised by Zoe Hayne, Sheilagh's daughter. It was a friendly well run race held in near perfect conditions (even a little too warm perhaps). The course uses part of the same route as the David Lloyd Quarter Marathon from Boscombe seafront then along the 'Prom' towards Hengistbury Head, the 5k runners peel off earlier up one of the zigzags – and they thought they had taken the easy option! There were quite a few WACers there – almost all as marshals, Jerry was timekeeper. I finished 22nd in a time of 46:42 which confirmed what I already knew – I have a lot of work to do to find some speed. My unusually high placing was because the race was not very well supported by the 'usual suspects', the only Dorset League Club who had major representation was Bournemouth Joggers who had a very impressive turnout. Well done Zoe and your team. *lan*

Wimborne 10 – 19th November – So the privilege of writing the Wimborne 10 up has fallen to me! What can I say that hasn't been said already – and probably many times! It was a fantastically well organised and well supported race as always due in no small measure to the superb planning of Jerry and the team. A particular appeal for me this year was that it fell on my birthday. Could this be the year that I break the 1.30 barrier? Having set off much too quickly with the first mile in under 8 minutes (not a pace I can keep up anyway!!) I knew I had to slow down and stay at about 9 minute miles to stand a chance. Well – what better chance could there have been? Although the race was in the unseasonably warm spell we were having at the time, and so too warm for me (!), the comfort of being on familiar territory and having the support of local crowds soon worked their magic and the 9 minute miles were soon happening comfortably. The scenic countryside

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and the colours of the changing season made a spectacular backdrop. It's always great to have the WAC crowd shouting support as you go past too, of course! I spoke to a few first timers on the way round, some of whom had travelled a long way to take part, so word has obviously got round that Wimborne 10 is a most-do on the Dorset circuit. I had mobile family support (shouting from the car!) at 8 miles, and by 9 I knew that barring a disaster, I was in with a chance. I always make sure that the people running around me are aware of the delights of good old 'Cardiac Hill' at the end. It seems this year most of them were, and we tail-gaters started to change down a gear (some of them into first!) to go for the summit. As we all know, the last thing you want when you're think you're on the home straight is to find you're unexpectedly going steeply uphill with the tank almost on empty! Feeling as if I could have gone further, I crossed the line with 32 seconds to spare, two and a half minutes faster than last year, my previous PB. (*Note to Ian* - I'm sure you're right – it must have been the ribbons!) As we injury-prone runners know only too well, achieving even modest personal goals tastes especially sweet when they are so few and far between! Really great to celebrate with the WACers at the finish line and the rightly famous refreshments supplied by Barbara and the team at the end. Thanks to everybody for a birthday to remember!

Footnote – The following week Debbie and I tackled the Downton Half Marathon– don't ask why! Picture if you can torrential rain, flooding, thunder, lightning, hail, mud, standing water – and all for 2 hours!! I was dead chuffed to pick up another PB – but less so to pick up a 'silent injury' which has meant I've been unable to run since. Hey ho – it was nice while it lasted!
Helen

Moors Valley 10k – 26th November – This is the third time that the RNLI has organised the run up to Christmas at Moors Valley. There are two runs, first the 10k, comprising approximately 600 runners and the 5k fun run which sees much fewer entrants and a lot of festive fancy dress! The weather leading up to the race had been particularly wet and windy and Sunday 26th November proved to be no different. It poured down for the entire 10k and the ground was muddy to say the least. But this didn't deter the 600 participants who showed up (I work for the RNLI and a large number of staff enter which makes for a very competitive time and a lot of racing round Holes Bay in the weeks leading up to the event!) It's a pleasant race on 'undulating' ground around the country park, where you leave the main paths the ground can be uneven. There was a lot of water on the ground and my running shoes will never look the same again.... Not the fastest 10k I've ever run but considering the conditions it was an enjoyable race, there's a nice atmosphere and it's enjoyable for spectators, the fruit punch and mince pie at the end are always very welcome. If contemplating this race next year, then you need to enter early, keep an eye on the RNLI website for entry forms as there are no entries on the day.
Jools

Gold Hill 9.5k – Oct 8th

Bob Caines (77)	55:59
Lee Longmore(119)	70:53
Cora Quinn (120)	70:53

124 finishers

Poole 5k Winter series – Oct 13th

Mark Hitchcott (41)	18:08
Graham Whiffen (96)	20:30
Clare Horsley (248)	29:27

269 finishers

Gillingham 7.5m – Oct 22nd

Steve Guy (43)	49:54
Neil Hopkinson (52)	51:20
Andy Horsley (69)	53:41
Nick Solomon (113)	60:51
Brian Lincoln (123)	62:06
Julie Mead (136)	64:57
Wendy Kennedy (144)	66:45
John Guy (169)	75:04
Mo Tristram (170)	75:05
Denise Craddock (173)	77:15
Sheilagh Howes (174)	77:16

182 finishers

The Stickler - Oct 29th

Graham Starmer (51)	1:19:49
Steve Guy (60)	1:20:38
Jon Braund (97)	1:25:29
Graham Whiffen (137)	1:28:45
Bob Caines (313)	1:50:28
John Guy (375)	2:06:33
Mo Tristram (376)	2:06:33
Julie Gosling (386)	2:12:49

390 finishers

Studland Stampede – Oct 29th

Mark Hitchcott (11)	52:14
Cathy Hartle (83)	64:23
Wendy Kennedy (146)	73:29
Lee Longmore (187)	86:44

197 finishers

AECC Dash Back 10k – Nov 5th

Ian Kennedy (22)	46:42
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107 finishers in 10k and 34 in the 5k race

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Wimborne 10 – Nov 19th

Steve Guy (60)	1:05:06
Neil Hopkinson (78)	1:07:07
Daryl Davies (128)	1:10:37
Selwyn Richards (142)	1:11:37
Nick Solomon (266)	1:20:58
Julie Maskell (328)	1:25:48
Debbie Whittle (345)	1:27:12
Denise Craddock (356)	1:27:58
Helen Allen (371)	1:29:34
Wendy Kennedy (377)	1:29:58
Guy Miller (403)	1:33:19
Julie Mead (410)	1:34:26
Clare Horsley (475)	1:56:06

482 finishers.

Poole 5k Winter series – Nov 24th

Mark Hitchcott (37)	18:30
Graham Whiffen (74)	20:02
Kim Jolliffe (186)	24:08

267 finishers

Boscombe 10k – Nov 25th

Jerry Shield (14)	38:47
Selwyn Richards (53)	43:34

288 finishers

RNLI Xmas 10k – Nov 25th

Derek Evans (4)	38:37
Sue Harrogate (178)	52:54

444 finishers

Christchurch 10k – Dec 10th

Jerry Shield (29)	37:10
Derek Evans (32)	37:25
Graham Starmer (35)	37:48
Mark Hitchcott (36)	37:52
Adee Mead (111)	42:38
Selwyn Richards (115)	42:52
Andy Horsley (116)	42:58
Nick Solomon (168)	45:14
Cathy Hartle (171)	45:26
Nigel Craddock (215)	47:52
Gillean Keith (220)	48:00
Julie Maskell (269)	50:35
Sue Harrogate (290)	51:18
Julie Mead (311)	52:27
Denise Craddock (317)	52:35
Helen Allen (323)	52:29
Wendy Kennedy (333)	53:23
Juliet Mellor (361)	55:00
Debbie Whittle (384)	55:56
Guy Miller (387)	56:00

Bob Caines (416)	57:49
Annemarie Fachiri (418)	57:55
Tim Box (419)	57:56
Sheilagh Howes (439)	59:44
Lee Longmore (485)	64:43
Cora Quinn (486)	64:43
Emma Richards (487)	64:51

524 finishers

Poole 5k Winter series – Dec 15th

Nick Solomon (106)	21:53
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204 finishers

Round the Lakes 10k – Dec 26th

Graham Starmer (21)	37:33
Steve Guy (50)	40:02
Ian Kennedy (169)	47:11
Debbie Whittle (268)	53:43

363 finishers

Somerley House 10k – Dec 31st

Mark Hitchcott (21)	40:52
Jon Braund (120)	48:06
Cathy Hartle (233)	53:58
Debbie Whittle (350)	58:33
John Guy (480)	68:54

505 finishers

Broadstone 1/4 Marathon – Jan 1st

Simon Mortimer (12)	40:06
Graham Starmer (16)	40:46
Jerry Shield (20)	41:20
Steve Guy (31)	42:41
Neil Hopkinson (36)	43:26
Graham Whiffen (49)	46:08
Richard Atkins (66)	47:38
Nick Solomon (69)	48:07
Phil Burgess (73)	48:45
Andy Horsley (76)	49:03
Ian Kennedy (90)	50:59
Brian Lincoln (122)	56:01
Denise Craddock (128)	56:45
Julie Mead (135)	57:18
Michele Whitehurst (137)	57:43
Bob Caines (138)	57:49
Wendy Kennedy (145)	59:34
Sheilagh Howes (157)	63:25
Julie Gosling	67:48
John Guy (173)	71:50

176 finish

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Because there are now so many names in the results in recent issues, henceforth the Wessex League cross-country results will only be shown in the Cross-Country Bulletins and on our website

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and also the league's website

www.wessexleague.com

Thanks for all your articles and news. It is always good to include pieces from new contributors. If you have any items you would like to contribute for April's newsletter please send them to

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