

GOYT VALLEY STRIDERS



NEWSLETTER August 2006

INTRODUCTION

Wow, what a lot to report in this issue. Before I do I must once again give you my usual apology for being late with the newsletter. I promise the next one will be on time!

Firstly, thank you to all those that have sent in articles for the edition month, they are very much appreciated. A BIG congratulations to Dave Ardern for winning the Great Wall of China Marathon. One to tell the Grand Kids about Dave!

We've gained a few new members over the past few months so I'd like to welcome you all to Goyt Valley Striders and hope you enjoy running and training with the club.

On the subject of training it has been suggested that we change the mid-week training night from Wednesday to Tuesday and Thursday. Yes that's an extra day, giving people more opportunities to train together. Talk about this amongst yourselves and if you think it's a good idea we'll give it a try from Tuesday 5th September. Sunday training will remain the same.

Finally, it's the Eccles Pike this month. As Kevin did a sterling job with the Tough 10K I've managed to persuade him to become race manager for the Eccles Pike. The race is on the 16th August from the Navigation Inn, Buxsworth. Marshals, timekeepers etc are required on the night. See you all there?

Mark

Eccles Pike

The Eccles Pike race takes place on the 16th August from the Navigation Inn, Buxsworth. The race starts at 7:30pm but help is required from 6:00pm onwards. Kevin has been promoted to Race Manager and is organising things. He will require car park attendants, marshals, timekeepers and general dogs bodies to help out on the night. Please make the effort.

For those that want to run, please do so. The more entries the better the race!

The Tough 10K

Well done to Steve and Kevin for all their hard work in making the Shady Oak Tough 10k such a success. Runners spirits were high despite the weather as 102 runners completed the course. A further congratulations goes to Kevin, whose tight budgeting saw us make a profit of £1.18 !!!

Curry Night

I'm beginning to think you're curry mad, well at least some of you. The most popular thing I get asked to organise is the curry night. Come on... for a running club that's disgraceful, how about request for the odd 5 miler or 10k in future? They're much more sensible requests!

Anyway. Not to disappoint I have decided the best night will be next Wednesday 16th after the Eccles Pike. We'll just take our chance and turn up at the restaurant.

Thanks to Julia Easter for the following article written the morning after the Shady Oak Tough 10k. Julia has since joined the club – welcome!

...I've had to censor it slightly as the GVS newsletter goes out to some of our younger readers. I'll leave everybody to work out what the word 'Flippen eck' should say!

RACE REPORT - SHADY OAK TOUGH 10K

Title:- Next time someone mentions "Shady Oak"

Ok.. let's say this - next time my work mate says "ooo do you fancy a nice little 10k in the country one night after work?" the words p*** and off will be strung together!

WOW... what an adventure

I haven't stopped laughing yet! Honest to god... so so funny and so so different to normal runs!! I thought I was doing ok with my running till this!

We bloody did it though and it was tough! All of us said the same things at the end "Flippen eck" ! Followed by "I cried" followed by "I just thought " Flippen eck "... and then "I thought shall I just stop and walk back to the pub"...hee hee

Starts off on this very pleasant slimline country lane, about 100 runners. Felt great, atmosphere was brilliant, very friendly considering it was lashing it down and windy as hell but there we were all giggling and chatting, all saying we'll be under an hour, boys doing the "I'll get the gold" etc... so we're off - down the lane to a SHARP (Eeek!) downhill turn then straight up HILL (not rise - a bleeding HILL) and the HILL was rough track!

Pants and Steve shot off... I thought Whhhaaaaoooooo right in first 100 yards and wanted to cry!!!

Scenery was nice... with a rain curtain!!! I've never been so wet!! Steve and Pants won 1st and 2nd in the "wet t-shirt" competition!! Pants says Steve's got a lovely pair! Rude as it is we all had nipples like bullets last night - bleedin freezin!!

Sheep kept Baaaaaing.. I think they were shouting "Baaaaaaaaarking...you're all...Baaaaarking"!

I never laughed at myself so much

BUT - I came last :-)

And that was well funny... I am "running" down a big rocky track almost in tears cos I was so bleedin scared of falling or twisting ankle and shattering my dreams of a 4:30 marathon at Blackpool (4th June in case you forgot!) - calmed myself down and thought just go slowly and careful...

Got to the bottom thinking everyone's scarpered but I'm sure there is someone behind me. Anyhow this guy catches me up and starts running with me. Chatting away. He's from the club. We get to a sign....4k... 4K!!! (my heart sank I can tell you - all that work and only at 4k!) and he nods to the marshall and then picks up the 4k sign and puts it in his rucksack (I wondered why he had that), the marshall says "I'll run the rest with you"... I'm thinking "weird" what about the other people behind me (I'm so dim!)

Guess what - the guy's only the bloody sweeper!!!! Oh nice one. Not only am I last but I am being "swept" along!! So we ran it us three all the rest of the way, including the Hill from Hell....

Oh my god, I'd been told there was a "hill" and knew it was coming but Jesus!! It was so steep you could see it in your face - in front of your nose!! No-one ran all the way up that? Got to the top of that (about a miles worth) and then there was a small straight and then ANOTHER one...arrggghhhh

Not sure what time - think it will be around 1hr 9mins or something

But without a doubt the best experience so far in running for me... same feelings as a scary roller coaster.. top run!

If you ask poor old Andy this morning what it was like he wont tell you the same story!! He asked me to ask Steve for the name of the guy who told him about it - so he can send someone round!! But considering it was only his 2nd 10k I think he did a stunning job and him and Steve were much faster than old twinkle toes here!!

Asked the sweeper about the off road one in Sept - he said "yeah it's tough that one" - so guess who's joining an off road running club! My god I've had my eyes opened!!!

Julia Easter



Julia at the end
of the
Blackpool
marathon on 4th
June 2006

Finish Time:
4:27
Congratulations

Away Day

Pete's agreed to arrange another Away Day. We've not decided exactly when and where yet but it will probably take place mid September. If anybody has any ideas of where they would like to go then just drop Pete a line. Usual distance is about 12 miles. My vote goes to Malham, last time we went there the running was excellent.

The Great Wall of China Marathon **By Dave Ardern – Winner 2006!**

China – a place where I remember feeling not quite as vertically challenged as many other places I have visited! In previous ventures to the Country I had never been further north than the Yanksee river. This time it would all be new. We would enter at Beijing and then travel 100 or so miles east to partake in a race which used a stretch of one of the Worlds' most remarkable man-made structures as part of its course. This was certainly going to be a bit of an adventure.

We arrived in Beijing five days before the race (and a day earlier than the race organisation began) and were met by friends of my wife who drove us to their home via the site of the Olympic village.

The weather was hot – over 30C and whilst nothing like as humid as I remembered the south of China, the atmosphere is burdened with a smog like dust which I was told is a continual problem and due to sand and dust storms to the north in Mongolia. My first thought was that the challenge for the competitors competing in the longer events in Olympics in two years time would be considerable.

I had entered the race as part of a package organised by **2:09 Events** on behalf of the main Danish organisers. This package included all the hotel accommodation, transportation, the obligatory route inspection (required for health and safety reasons), the race entry, a gala presentation evening event and a number of additional site seeing visits.

Following a day spent with our friends in Beijing, I joined the main race party at a very pleasant hotel on the south side of the city centre and after a day spent sight seeing we transferred to a second hotel closer to the race location. On the Thursday two days before the event the whole party were taken to inspect the start / finish area and to walk the section of the wall that would be used for all of the events. (Four events are put on – 5k, 10k, half marathon and the full marathon – designed to accommodate a complete ability spread and to maximise the participation). Observation of the general terrain from the coach window as we got close to the event location set the scene. Just like the typical photographs you see of the wall – lots of very precipitous, ‘peaky’ mountains with not a flat square foot of land for miles.

The route used a short but very steep section of the wall at a place called Huangyaguan which is the site of a fort or castle in the Huangya Pass which is where the race would be based and was the location of both the start and finish. This section of the wall was renovated during the Ming Dynasty in the 16th century as it was still used as a means of defence at that time. Here it is a very impressive structure which follows the skyline of a most precarious landscape and is just as the photos in the books.

On arriving at the fort we were allowed to wander around its centre where a number of stands were located with a variety of functions but mainly involved with selling race memorabilia etc. My wife wandered over to one of the stands which had a banner above saying Race Organisation, and started talking to a pleasant chap I guess in his mid-fifties who turned out to be the Chairman of the Danish Athletics Federation.

I walked over and found myself opposite a tall lean looking chap with long hair who I guessed to be in his early forties. In front of him was a course profile map around which a discussion quickly built up. At my side I could hear Emma making rather immodest comments about my best marathon time to the elder gentleman loud enough for all to hear. This triggered me asking the question if the younger guy had ever run the race – “not this one but some other marathons” came the reply in slightly Scandinavian English. Feeling more confident I asked “Oh how did you get on – what’s your best performance?” He replied, “do you mean my best time or my best performance – if you mean my best performance I’d say it was winning the London Marathon in 1988”. There then followed one of those pregnant pauses when your brain goes into hyper active mode trying to think of suitable words, your mouth opens in good time to utter the words but despite the activity going on in your brain, no sound is uttered. In sympathy your mouth closes again – because, after all, it would be rude not too!



After being bused to the far end of the section that would be used, we walked along with the other 1100 or so competitors the 3.5 km back to the fort. I quickly began to feel that I had underestimated the severity of the challenge. I had read a description of the route in the info sent by the organising company in the weeks leading up to our departure. This was very descriptive of the types of surface to be used and descriptions of the wall but did not give statistics of the actual amounts of climbing.

The only indication there was spot height figures of the various towers which interspersed the wall at 300-400 m intervals. Looking at these I had calculated that the greatest height difference on the course was not much over 1000 feet – so it couldn't be that bad! Equally once you were on the main wall itself the height difference between towers was minimal – so it must be almost flat! It was this latter assumption where I really came unstuck – the amount of the wall which was flat could be counted in inches on the figures of one foot. In many parts there were ascents and descents between towers of several hundred feet and the steepness of some of the steps was not funny. There were some people who became quite frightened looking down the drops – not the ones off either side – the ones down the steps. Whilst it was dry, hot and sunny on that day, my main concern was what the surface might become like if it rained.

All too soon the day of the race dawned and we were awoken at some ungodly hour to consume light breakfast, check-out of the hotel and travel the short distance from the hotel to arrive at the start area by 06:00 such that the race could start in the relative cool of the early morning. The day was slightly overcast but the threatened showers did not look likely. With the usual last minute preparations underway in the start-finish area there was a final opportunity to eye up the opposition. Looking around there appeared to be a number of very fit looking Germans together with a smattering of slim Australians (possibly Kiwis as my ear for such accents has never been overly acute). Considering my chances I thought that best 'old git' was a realistic target for the forthcoming activity.

As the bewitching hour neared, we gathered behind the start line and were introduced to the crowd and Provincial Chinese dignitaries who were inviting to open the event.

That over the gun was sounded and we trotted off out of the fort and onto the main road through the pass.

As usual I had pushed my way up to the front at the start line so was almost immediately at the head of events, surprised to find that no one seemed to be wanting to take up the running. I trotted along at a very steady pace the first half mile or so to the bottom of the 5km climb to the start of the Wall. It was only once on the climb that the natural selection process seemed begin and I was joined by a tall, Spanish looking chap, the characteristic Australian and a third chap who appeared more northern European. The four of us eyed one another up and down as we pressed on up the climb, through a small village and passed our first groups of local Chinese spectators. These were very inquisitive people. Not the very vocal and enthusiastic spectators you find in the major city marathons, but people stopping in the midst of their daily activities to turn, smile and practise their very rudimentary English. For the runners this was just as motivational as any loud music banging in your ears.

After the first 5km climb the tarmac ended and continued along a rough path, up to the wall itself. An extremely steep flight of steps took us to the top of the wall and on to a smooth stoned surface. The group of four immediately split as firstly this flight of steps and then the severity of the continued route took its toll. I found myself behind the tall Spaniard having left the other two early leaders behind. Aware that we had covered only a sixth of the race I did not push on too hard at this stage, letting the Spaniard go on ahead.

At this point the wall is around 10 metres above the surrounding land and probably seven or eight metres wide with a small two storey high fortress every three to four hundred metres or so. The idea appears to have been to

follow a route along the skyline thus being in the best strategic position for defence. However, this must have proved a most demanding challenge for the original builders and more latterly a considerable challenge to people trying to run along it.

As we progressed I soon noticed that unusually I rapidly caught the leader as the route went steeply down and then he would pull away from me up the steep steps. This was a significant advantage as we came to the very steep and considerable descent to the start /finish area after the first loop. Once off the descent we went along the walls surrounding the fortress which was nearly 1km long itself and having a tower at each corner plus one in the middle of each section of wall where you would climb and descend 20 or so steps – still not flat! Then down onto ‘dry land’ through the man gate of the fort and out onto roads once more.

Once onto straighter roads I had the opportunity to take stock. My nearest rival was probably two hundred yards behind and I considered slowing to let him catch up as the prospect of running the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ distance on my own did not excite me. The next 25km or so was through rural Chinese countryside along routes I had not visited or even seen and I was totally reliant on the way markers and marshals to ensure that I followed the correct route. Someone alongside to share the navigational responsibility seemed like a good idea. However, despite consciously slowing my pace no-one appeared to get nearer to me. I considered if this might be to do with my choice of pre-race deodorant – I also considered that I might have already strayed from the course and was only going to stop when I met the coast which given my approximate direction at the time, I would have required several new pairs of Nike’s. My

salvation was a young Chinese lad on his bike who was sent up to escort my run.

Due to the nature of the route which continually switched from rural vaguely tarmacked road to track to off-road path and back in rapid succession meant to have a lead car was not feasible. Hence the better option – a young lad on his bike. Much better for me on my own because I could spark up a conversation from time to time with him and relieve the doubt in my mind of - was I going too quickly and would I suffer the consequences when I had to climb that 1000 ft set of steps on the way back.

In fact the next 2+ hours passed quite quickly. No other runners coming up and me keeping a steady pace along the hilly and ever changing course. Not only was the monotony broken by spurts of Anglo-Sino dialogue (my Guide's English was considerably better than my Chinese but we certainly weren't going to get onto an in depth discussion on Chinese political history) but also by the richness of the culture and landscape through which the route passed. Several villages were encountered where the local population seemed to be split between farmers and local industry in place to support of the farmers. Children would come out of the houses to shout greetings and the older people would stand and gaze. At the race banquet the following day I heard a story that a few hours before the race started when the marshals were out checking the route they came across an old lady sweeping the road. She was doing this to ensure that there were no loose stones or sharp objects that might cause a problem for the runners. Given the circumstances you don't come across that kind of consideration very often.

Towards the end of this loop the course for the marathon merged with that of the half marathon at a point where the half marathon runners had covered around 16km and the

marathoners around 30km. As the half had started a few minutes after the main event this 4km or so overlap gave me a chance to mix with a few other runners. However, all too soon I was back at the fortress with the half marathoners sprinting in to their finish and me having the prospect of the last loop back over the wall and those steps.

In the preceding few miles I had noticed that the bounce had gone from my stride and my legs were feeling



somewhat heavy. Sure enough – as I tackled the first part of the climb the concept of running was soon forgotten and a quick march was the best that I could muster. Unfortunately the deterioration in performance continued as various parts of my legs began to cramp up. The main problem was my calves in which I no longer had any confidence. By the top of the first long climb both were on the verge of cramping more or less with every step. This was

now a great concern as I had no idea how far I was in front of the field nor how long it was going to take me to the finish in the rapidly deteriorating state. Equally as I started down the first on the steep undulations along the wall I also became concerned that my legs buckling going up was one thing but buckling at the top of one of these runs of steps could be painful in many other ways. I stopped a couple of times to stretch out my lower legs but on each occasion the benefit was only temporary.

continual glances back just confirm my lowering confidence but on each occasion I could not see anyone approaching.

After what seemed like an eternity I gingerly ran down the last few steps and back onto the 5km road descent to the finish. This I had hoped would at least allow me to make some progress but unfortunately the gradient was such that I was still considerably hindered by the state of my legs and looking at my watch through each km suggested that I was losing at least 1 min per km on the run in. I was dreading being caught as there would have been absolutely nothing I could have done about it.

Thankfully, no-one other than my trusted mate on his bike came up to me on the run in. He met me part way down the descent and appeared happy to be fulfilling the role. Whilst I very much appreciated the company I couldn't help but look across in complete envy – me plodding down the hill with laboured strides fearing the sharp pain of cramp with almost every one; him sitting above two wheels not even having to turn the pedals to make forward progress.

Off the descent one last look behind and back up the hill and onto the last few hundred metres of road to the finish. At last I thought I am home and dry. Through the fortress gate and into the square where the finish line was erected. Job done.

Whilst the Great Wall Marathon is certainly not a big city marathon and the field is clearly not the same class. The enthusiasm of the spectators and the crowd filling the square at the finish was just as chaotic. I was by filmed by the Provincial TV and interviewed by the Chinese press, and I had numerous people come up to me wanting my autograph on their clothes who promptly began arguing amongst themselves when one took off with the indelible marker pen I had been given to carry out the process. I asked my wife –

“how do you say – please can I sit down in Chinese?”
Thankfully I sat down just before I would have otherwise fallen.

Striders; A Profile!

I've just had a look at the entry list for this year's Ben Nevis Race on 2 September. I was pleased to see that three of us will be tackling this monster again (Andy, Francis and myself) and it started me thinking; how is it that such a small club get involved in so much? Paul has just completed the LAMM and has entered the KIMM, Mark R is in training for Tour de Mont Blanc (150km and some very big hills) and Kev (little) is planning 3 marathons in 3 days. A group of, predominantly, Striders recently finished the High Peak Marathon (42miles, 11pm start) in 7th place, seconds behind a team including Ranulph Fiennes and Yiannis tridimas. Then there's the 56 mile Bullock Smithy that Steve and Kev (little) are eyeing up. And not just attending races. Members of Strider's organise no less than four fell races and a road race, and those who aren't organising are very loyal helpers and marshals. Then there is Dave who recently won the Great Wall of China Marathon!

So why is it then that this little club based in the densely populated Whaley Bridge produces so much. Well let's have a look at what we've got. There's the countryside I suppose; plenty of good running on our doorstep, no doubt about that. But, surely there's more to it than that. Buxton for example is well situated (I've been known to do a little plodding around and about there myself) but Buxton AC don't seem to have.

anyone daft enough to travel for about 7 hours to run up and down a near vertical scree slope. And I wasn't joined by many Macc. runners in the river Nevis last year at the end of the race. Although, they too are quite daft and routinely send people up to the Lakes to do the Bob Graham. Anyway, I'm in danger of losing my point here. And the point is how did we get to have such a high profile small profile club.

Let's have a look at a few of the usual suspects. Maybe the answer is there.

The round up has to start with Pete; the man they named after an American drama about people stranded on a desert island. The undeniable leader and navigator but with a touch of Benny Hill about him. (there have been a number of occasions when we've entered a field, run all the way around it and then come back out the way we went in). Pete is the only runner I know who can run for four hours and put weight on (have a good look in that bum bag if you get chance).

Then there is Mark W. The man who told his wife when he got married that he ran Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Now the key player in keeping everything a float and chief supporter of everything running related. When they checked his heart out in hospital, apparently it said Goyt Valley Striders on it.

Then there is Kev (little), Well where do you start with Kev! Actually, preferably you don't! We've lost some very promising runners to Kev. You can just imagine them going home and saying "not going back there, my ears are bleeding, some little guy started talking to me about marathons, I didn't get a word in for three hours".

Also not a natural navigator, Kev once got lost for a number of hours and appeared just as we were about to contact Mountain Rescue. Where was he running at the time of this life threatening high drama? the Lakes? the Scottish Highlands? Nope: Goyt Valley near Windgather!!

Oh and Scott, let's not forget him. The Bionic man. Rarely lasts more than one come-back run. Not someone who makes it out very often for obvious reasons, which is a shame because he is very fast, even with a broken ankle! Apparently, his wife has just bought him one of those Zorb balls just so he can get to the shops safely.

And there are others, many others, whom for now I will spare. People who run Marathons dressed as a big heart, but still do so in under three hours. People who escape the bad weather in England to ski through blizzards in far off mountains resting only in shaky wooden climbing huts. People who put French exchange students with a basic grasp of English on road crossings at races with instructions to stop the traffic.

And is the future looking any brighter? Nope! Paul, one of our new finds managed to get involved in a spot of head-butting to vent frustration on the LAMM a few weeks



ago. At least Zidane didn't tackle a big rock. A huge gash across his head, bleeding profusely what did he do? Kept running.. for a few more hours. Then sought medical attention, namely a needle and cotton in a tent. He said to me, "they gave me a piece of wood and said bite this".

That's just pure comedy. Apparently, when he had the stitches removed the nurse said he'd got mud and grass in the cut. I'm also told that one of the other competitors asked a friend who the man with the cut head was; the reply; "I think he's one of those Goyt Striders, be about right wouldn't it, surprised he found his way up here! and he eats wood!"

So I reckon the reason that there's so much going on is that the club itself is full of people who want to do more than plod along next to the road looking at their watch. People who like to try to push themselves that little bit further. People who form a club that its members are proud to be a part of.

Alistair Fitzgerald

Tesco Junior Great Manchester Run

Congratulations to Erica Sanders who at 9 years and 2 days old took part in this Tesco race for 9-11 year olds at the City of Manchester stadium June 2006. She won the younger race last year and came fourth out of over 300 runners in the older age group this year



Erica proudly wearing the GVS vest.

Congratulations!

Vests

I've taken delivery of a new batch of vests. They are permanently kept in the back of my car, so just say the word and for £12.00 you can have one!



Fell Running Association Fell Relay

The Club have entered a team in this years fell relay. The event takes place on Saturday 14th October 2006 at the Castle Carr Estate, Luddenden Valley, South Pennines. Kevin Day is organising the GVS team so if you're interested in taking part, ensure you let him know in good time.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Latest Club Championship as follows

Name	Cloud Nine	Herod Farm	Oldham ½	Eyam½	Rainow	Board Head	Round The Ressers	Offerton 10K	Peak Forest	Total
Andy Butler	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	20		159
Kevin Day	18		19	18	14	17	17	18	17	138
Steve Hennessey	19	19			17	18	18	17	19	127
Peter Hill	17	18	17	17	11	15	14		15	124
Jonathan Hill					18	19	16	19	20	92
Shaun Coram			18		16				18	52
Stephen Sanders					13	16	15			44
Mark Richards					15		19			34
Dave Ardern				20						20
Alistair Fitzgerald					19					19
Dave Bowen									16	16
Hannah Coram									14	14
Sarah Ledbury							13			13
Steve Berry									13	13
Tim Newton					12					12
Julia Easter									12	12
Paul Hunt					10					10

Date

Month

Race

Race 10

Sep 16

Lantern Pike

Race 11

Oct 1

Macclesfield Half

Race 12

Nov 4

Langley 7

Application Form

If you want to join The Striders or know anybody who wishes to join then complete the attached form and send it to the secretary.

GOYT VALLEY STRIDERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

SURNAME																		SEX	
FIRST NAME										DATE OF BIRTH									
										Day		Month		Year					
POSTAL ADDRESS																			
TOWN																			
COUNTY												POSTAL CODE ESSENTIAL							
DAYTIME TELEPHONE (STD ESSENTIAL)										HOME TELEPHONE (STD ESSENTIAL)									

I fully understand that I shall train and race with Goyt Valley Striders running club entirely at my own risk, and that the organisers of Goyt Valley Striders running club are in no way responsible for any injury, illness or loss that I may suffer or any injury that I may cause during any activity connected with the club.

SIGNED:

DATED:

If under 16, signature of parent or guardian

Useful Addresses And Telephone Numbers

The Chairman

Peter Hill
127 Buxton Road
Whaley Bridge
High Peak

Tel: 01663 734756

The Secretary

Mark Whelan
11 Shallcross Mill Road
Whaley Bridge
High Peak
Sk23 7JQ

Tel: 01663 733930

The Treasurer

Di Howe
Eastwood
25 Elnor Lane
Whaley Bridge
High Peak

Tel: 01663 733382