

GOYT VALLEY STRIDERS



NEWSLETTER October 2006

INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone to this autumn edition of the GVS newsletter. It's only a couple of months since the last edition but there has been so much going on I thought it best to go to press early with this one.

I compiled my first GVS newsletter back in 1999 so I make this the seventh year that I've been producing and editing our club magazine. The reason for saying this is because I feel rather embarrassed that during the whole of that time I haven't put pen to paper and written an article myself. Until now that is! My first article is a brief history of my running to date, what my fastest times are, favourite races etc. Not too interesting, but nevertheless there for the record!

A big thank you to all the other contributors in this issue. You really have surpassed yourselves this time and enabled me to produce what I think is the best effort yet.

There are a few articles in the newsletter I wish to draw your attention to; Firstly, Terry's race will take place on Sunday 19th November and I would like to see as many club members as possible taking part in this. Secondly, the mid week training sessions have now officially switched from Wednesday to Tuesday and Thursday evenings, so why not make a special effort to attend at least one session a week.

...and finally, a **big** welcome to all our new members. We hope you enjoy running and training with the Striders.

Mark

Terry's Race

This will be the 6th year that Terry's race has been run. Terry was a respected and well-liked member of the club, who unfortunately died prematurely in 2000. The race is unusual in that **anybody who takes part has a chance of winning**. The course details are below. You will set off at 5-minute intervals wearing **NO watch**. Having guessed your time for the distance the nearest person to their guessed time will win.

The race will take place on Sunday November 19th, starting at 9:30am from the Taxal Lay-by (bottom of Long Hill).

A reminder of the course: (Clockwise this year!)

The course starts at the lay-by on Long Hill – down the track – left onto track through woods – across fields – right cross bridge – track and fields passing Knipe Farm – up towards Oldfield Farm – onto Hoo Moor – Road to Pym Chair – Track adjacent to road leading to Windgather – Onto track and through trees onto Taxal Moor – Descend Taxal Moor (passing the tree planted by the rambling club in memory of Terry) – 100 yards on road then down through fields to Taxal – pass Church and back to start

Maps will be available for those who require one. Please make every effort to attend; this is one of the most respective events in the clubs calendar. Notification in advance would be appreciated.

If anyone wants to cover the course in training one Sunday morning prior to the race then just let me know. Following Terry's race we will retire to a pub somewhere for a drink and Sunday lunch - all welcome!

My First Season as a GVS Lunatic.

When I joined the GVS just over a year ago, I was a mere five miler. I had done quite a few fell races, but I was always with the last runners as they crossed the line. Someone stated that I should join a running club and the GVS club (in a nightmare I think) was mentioned and so I signed up.

My first few runs with the club on Wednesdays did at first pose a struggle. A madman asked me on my first trip out to try the Sunday sessions. He enthused that 'once we ran for over four hours'. I thought about this for a millisecond and then politely declined stating that I had to stick sharp pins in my eyes that Sunday! Over the next few sessions I did improve and my big red face and bulging eyes reduced to a slightly gasping for air look.

At first I hardly knew anyone, all faces blending into one (pretty scary). The first person I did seem to get to know was Kevin Day, who did seem to talk quite enthusiastically about marathons. I thought he'd be the type of person that would only do a pub-crawl if it were over 26 miles and then he would want to do three in a weekend! Then there was 'big hair' Peter, recognisable by his.....big hair. Mark the beeping club secretary, who always seemed to find the biggest hills then walk up them whilst sadistically grinning as we struggled to try and run up them! There was Hannah, who was easy to recognise, being my wife! I did get Jonathon Hull and Alistair mixed up at first, then I realised that Jonathon was a modest type, a smiley chappie, whereas 'Alistair' was more of an action man. (Once whisking his shirt off to dive dramatically into the Whaley Bridge reservoir to rescue a boat!).

It was at the Christmas Do that I was entered and won the Marathon lottery. I thought that big times were ahead and fame, fortune and glory awaited me at the London Marathon. This was not to be, as the sudden increase in training saw a re-occurrence of an old knee problem. In the end I had to pull out of the marathon and Alistair took my place.

I did get a good start to the season due to the training I had put in over the winter months. I ran the 'Oldham Half' in 1:45 followed by the 'Kinder Downfall' a few weeks later, where I did 1.34. With my Knee still playing up I foolishly put great effort into the 'Rainow 5'. I did knock 5 min off my previous time, but put myself out of action for a few weeks as the effort caused my knee to flare up again. I did return on the 'Peak Forest', where I struggled, but still knocked time off.

I had decided enough was enough and booked myself in for Physiotherapy treatment. The exercises they gave me were strange but worked; one exercise looked as though I was making a great effort to go to the toilet. These did improve my knee, my running and my long-term constipation problem (people that know me always tell me I'm full of it!). When I returned to do the 'Goyts Moss' I found that I knocked a few minutes off last year but the 'Cracken Edge' was a revelation, knocking a full seven minutes off the previous year. The 'Eccles Pike' race was a big struggle; something to do with eating a meal King Henry would have been proud of an hour before the start. I still knocked a min off though.

All in all I have had a good season with the GVS and I have gone from strength to strength.

I am now an official mid-pack runner, but I have scraped into the top half of most of this years' runs, which is a great achievement for me. The encouragement, motivation and friendship I have got from my fellow GVS runners has been great and I continue to recommend the club to all my friends, well all one of them!

Andy Pead will be pushing me harder this year. Especially as all his training runs involve the highest hills possible. Along with the increased runs with the club, I am looking forward to a good winters training and a good second season. Bring it on.....

Shaun Coram

Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are now scheduled for the second Tuesday in every month from December 2006. Unless stated otherwise they will be held at The Navigation Inn, Buxsworth and will commence at 9:00pm

Vests

Club vests are available at an attractive price of £12.00. Members are requested to wear their vest when racing as this helps promote the club. There is the other small additional point of complying with UK Athletic rules as well!

London marathon

As per the norm the club has been granted a guaranteed London Marathon place. In the first instance priority will be given to those who have entered and been rejected through the London Marathon ballot. If nobody has been rejected then it will be open to all club members. Anybody eligible will go in the hat and their name will be drawn out at the Xmas Drinks session. If you're interested in going in the draw let me know; please let me know whether you have been rejected through the ballot or not.

The North Face Ultra Trail Tour du Mont Blanc

One Hundred and Fifty Eight kilometres (98 miles) through the French Alps in a circuit around Mt Blanc, with a total climb of 8,500m, was the aim for this year. With the race in its fourth year a record 2539 starters left Chamonix at 7pm on Friday 25th August; a few were racing, but most were aiming to complete the distance within the cut-off time of 45 hours. There's a high attrition rate in this race – 1151 finished (fewer than half who started). I did a good time of 27hrs45mins, and finished 65th, a long way off the winner's 21hrs6mins (Marco Olmo, a 58 year-old Italian) but achieving my sub-29 hour objective, and thus avoiding a second night on the mountains.

Most people only ask one question when I tell them about this race - 'Why?' My usual reply is 'Curiosity', but I remember that the idea was planted during one of the Goyt Valley Strider mid-week runs by, of all people, Scott.

2006 was the year I turned myself into an endurance machine, and by the end of April I'd done 54 and 40 mile ultras plus a marathon. But then disaster - my plan was disrupted in May by a hip injury which made it painful even to walk, and which knocked my race fitness back several months. With running training impossible I turned to the bike, and knocked out some long rides in order to keep the heart & lungs ticking over. Fitness being restored, I worked with a great physiotherapist to stabilise my hips and build strength back into my legs; good physios are the ones who don't stop you training, but work out how to fix the root of the problem and keep you training.

By the end of July I'd increased my long runs back up to 20 miles, and full of confidence took on a 30 mile ultra, but first my slowing pace and then the agony of cramp in both calves at 28 miles taught me a valuable lesson in dehydration and salt deficiency.

Physical preparation was completed by getting acclimatised to the altitude for 10 days and by four 90 minute recce runs over parts of the course prior to the race. I also prepared by mentally rehearsing the race, planning out my intermediate times, and visualising how I would be coping when it got tough. From others I learnt that many start this race too fast and then have to drop out. Since my training had been heavily curtailed, and I'd had little time in the mountains, my tactics were to stay slow and stay cool – mentally and physically – and grind out the miles at just above walking pace.

I'd spent a lot of time selecting my kit, and one of the advantages of this race is that you can send kit bags ahead to the two main checkpoints at Cormayeur and Champex. It was comforting to know that I had dry clean kit and shoes waiting for me if I needed it. I wanted to travel as light as possible; sounds obvious really, but it's a real exercise to cut out the stuff you won't use, so I'd bought a small rucsac that would be full with just my minimum kit and the mandatory survival gear. Thus on the start line most of the other runners looked overdressed to me; I was warm enough in a thin T-shirt and shorts, while many looked ready for an expedition in their waterproofs, long leggings, and warm hats. Anyhow, my kit served its purpose – I stayed comfortably warm, hardly sweating, while moving at a steady pace, until the night's chill made me put on a second layer and tights at 11.30pm. Throughout I wore Inov-8 310 Flyrocs with ultra-thin monoskin socks - my feet were fine, and the grip was faultless.

Within 2 hours of the start I'd reached the second of 23 checkpoints, been scanned in, grabbed some food and drink; soon our head torches went on, and stayed on for the next 8½ hours. Noiselessly we trudged up the 3 tall Cols (2,500m each) during the night – any conversation between runners had finished well before midnight – pretty much in single file, just plodding up going with the flow. Few sights can rival the view back from the top of a 2,500m Col of a stream of bobbing head lights stretching way into the distance, or the starlit sky with the occasional flash of a shooting star. By dawn we'd covered almost halfway and it was a steep downhill on the ski slopes into Courmayeur where I got a real tonic seeing my wife and children who'd come through the Mt Blanc tunnel, and arrived at the checkpoint 5 minutes before I did.

Here I fixed a small ankle blister with a Compeed; this and some chafing around my tender parts were the only injuries I sustained. Saturday was turning into a very nice day, but the clear blue skies made it hard work with the heat, and the morning did turn into a bit of a slog, though the views were stunning. Spirits were lifted a little by one official who seemed to say to me “Cent Vingt Cinq” – at this stage I had no idea where I was in the field, so 125th was a great place to be; I found out later that he'd actually said “Cent Quatre Vingt Cinq” (185). The worst part of the morning slog was the Col Grand Ferret which went up and up and up; I passed a few who'd just collapsed on the side of the path and were catching up with their sleep; there was a temptation to join them, but I reckoned that stopping would just make it harder to get going again, and it would only delay the finish.



At midday I got to the top, had a look around and then stumbled off downhill into a long valley that I hoped would take me about 3 hours later to Champex. By now I'd been on the go for 17 hours, with only short stops for food and drink at each checkpoint, but I was well fuelled and coped well with the next steep downhill, and when it levelled out I maintained a good pace into Champex. With 'only' 42km (a marathon) including two final steep ascents to 2000m, and about 7 hours of running to go I felt good and strong. I was 135th at this stage but was running faster than everyone else around me, and managed to keep this pace going through to the finish. Rain and squally wind started at 5pm, but I was moving quickly enough not to get cold. Most of the other runners were at this stage looking miserable either walking or jogging slowly covered in their heavy waterproofs, but I was still enjoying myself and got past another 30 on the final two big downhills. Rain was lashing down at Vallorcine at 8.30pm, but with about 2 hours left, and on familiar terrain, I was eager to finish as soon as possible.

My progress through the day had been logged at each checkpoint, and the race computer had sent out automatic SMS texts – so the family were ready waiting for me at Chamonix as I closed on the finish. The photo shows the final 50 yards running in with daughter Bella at 10.45pm. In fact the organisation was superb with 800 volunteers making the whole thing go well, and the North Face sponsorship provided a top quality fleece to all finishers. Luckily, the race went well for me; the only hard bits were getting moving again after stopping at checkpoints; my initial steady pace meant that I didn't get tired in the early stages, and had lots of reserves for the second half. If you are inspired for 2007, the online entries will probably open in December on <http://www.ultratrailmb.com/accueil.php> but be quick - last year all places were taken within two weeks.

Mark Richards

A Short History...

I've been producing and editing the GVS newsletter since 1999 and it just occurred to me that during the whole of that time I've never written an article; I thought it was about time I put that right!

I've decided to write a brief history of my running to date, what state I'm in at the moment and what my future ambitions are. It all started back in 1993; I hadn't run since my schooldays and decided to give it another go. I was 27 and reasonably fit after 3 years mountain biking, something which I had taken up to stave off weight gain having given up smoking. The running was meant to compliment the mountain biking and help me get through those long winter months when cycling wasn't possible during the week.

The first few runs were very short, about a mile in fact, and despite my perceived level of fitness I did find it quite hard. I stuck to the task and within a couple of months I was comfortable running about four miles on hilly roads. Several months went by and my attempts at running became hit and miss. During the summer I got chatting to Ralph Longden, a now life member of the Striders, who told me about GVS and some of the exploits he had undertaken, such as the Ashbourne to Whaley Bridge run. Despite his positive sales pitch I didn't feel comfortable joining the club at the level I was at, but did take up his offer to run the Stockport 10. This was to be my first race and one that left me with a few blisters, stiff legs but an addiction for running that has stayed with me ever since; my time for the race in 1993 was 1:21.

Enthused by the experience at the race I decided to step up my training. One of the girls at work was a regular runner and agreed to run a couple of times at lunch during the week. This coupled with 2 or 3 sessions at night enabled me to make good progress and my fitness grew. By this time the mountain bike was consigned to the occasional blast at weekends if it was lucky.

My next target was to be the Wilmslow Half Marathon where I felt really confident about a sub 1:45, my only concern being the distance, as I had still only run 10 miles. The day got the better of me and I set off far too fast and by 10 miles I was hanging on. I stumbled through the last 3 miles with people constantly overtaking me; to my amazement my time was 1:39. Like the previous year my running took a back seat during the summer and I only ran a couple of races, needless to say I didn't make much progress, in fact I went backwards registering 1:46 at Chesterfield, 1:46 at Bassetlaw and 1:48 at Butterley Brick.. This is something that has stayed with me since and I remain stagnant or lose fitness during the summer, but make most progress over the winter.

1995 saw me make some progress culminating in a December Half at Keyworth where a registered I 1:34. 1996 was the year I would start to make real progress. This was the first year I'd run the London Marathon and the year I would do most races, 26 in total. London was my first Marathon and despite an upset stomach I finished in 3:42, later that year I ran 3:50 at Manchester, again with a bad stomach. My best achievement in 96 was a 1:26 half at Wilmslow.

1997 was my best year. In January I ran 1:19 at the Helsby ½ and the following week ran the Tough Guy in 2:40! In Spring I ran London in 3:07.

I had good results on the fells that year with a 2:30 at the Roaches. The only downside of the year was the twisted ankle at the Christmas Cracker which prevented a very high finish.

1998 was again a good year and saw my performances improve. I ran the Grindleford Gallop for the first time in March of 98. Coming to the end of Froggett Edge with a mile or so to go I passed Terry Lardiner who had set off very early as a walker. He said I was in 4th place just behind the third placed male. I stepped on the gas, only to lose my way in the woods and end up in 9th place. I ran 2:56 that year, which still rates as one of my best runs ever. The Grindleford Gallop remains one of my favourite runs of all time.

The 1998 London was supposed be my sub 3:00 marathon, but it was not to be. My training had gone perfect. I'd run 113 sessions in the preceding 100 days before London and averaged over 60 miles per week. I had peaked at just the right time, or I thought I had. The day set off well, I arrived early, warmed up and got at the front of the race. By the time the race set off I was over the line in 3 or 4 seconds. Everything was going well, too well, something had to go wrong; this would be the weather. It was hot, in the low 70's and burning. I got to the half way point in 1:24, a bit too fast but I was feeling good. By fifteen the weather had changed. It was now throwing it down with a previously unheard of strong London wind blowing straight in my face. By 18 or 19 I was hanging on, but still on target for a 2:50. By the time I got to 22 I was completely knackered. The last few miles were hell. I still had a chance of a sub 3, but it was diminishing. When I turned into The Mall I could see the clock ticking at 2:59 and a few seconds. I'd blown it; I crossed the line in 3:01:32.

This remains my best marathon time to date and my most sickening! Despite my London disappointment the remainder of the year was good. A 2:13 on the Kinder Trog, followed by a 6:45 High Peak 40 left me feeling on a high.

The following years showed a steady decline in my running interspersed with the occasional glimmer of hope. Two further attempts at London failed to deliver my dream sub 3:00, but I still managed to post creditable times of 3:06 and 3:09. I completed several other half marathons around the 1:21/1:22 mark before injury in 2003 kept me out for a long spell.

Towards the end of 2003 things began to improve and 2004 set off really well. A 1:41 at Helsby eased me back into full training, followed by the Tigger Tor and Grindleford Gallop. The Grindleford Gallop in 2003 was particularly memorable as Steve, Kevin and myself ran round this as a training run. At about the 19 mile mark I cramped up and Kevin and Steve used all their encouragement to get me to the end. The memorable bit was Kev forgetting to clip checkpoint two and having to run the mile or so back up the fell to do this. Of course Steve and myself didn't run off saying 'come on, this is our chance, if we're quick we'll lose him!'"

Disaster struck in 2004. On the Saturday one week before Easter I was heading through Goyt Valley on an early Saturday morning run. Running up towards the Knipe I was struggling to get my breath and had an unusual tight pain in my chest. I walked the 2 or 3 miles back home and put it down to the beer and curry I'd had the previous night! That week things didn't get better. On Good Friday I woke up knowing that things were serious and asked Sarah to take me to Casualty. Within a couple of hours I was on a hospital ward and remained there for over two weeks. I'd been diagnosed with having a severe Pericarditis and had around 1½ pints of fluid drained off my heart.

Whilst in hospital I underwent numerous tests. There were daily echocardiograms assessing the condition of my heart and thrice daily electrocardiograms looking for improvements in my condition which at this point was severely abnormal.

My consultant explained that he was concerned that my heart was almost twice the size it should be and my heart trace (rhythms) were all over the place. When I explained that I was a runner and that could account for my large heart, he looked me up and down and said "I don't think so, that's usually reserved for elite runners". Whilst I remained in hospital my condition improved to a degree, but not enough to be given the all clear. The consultant finally told me that he thought I may have a condition known as Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. HP is a condition, usually genetically inherited, that causes the left ventricle of the heart to enlarge; it is the most sudden cause of death in young athletes and is thought to affect about 1 in 500 of the population. The thickening of the heart muscle means that that it cannot pump blood around the body as effectively as normal, the result being that if under stress the heart could collapse.

To determine whether I had the disease I agreed to detrain completely for 3 or 4 months. In the end I ended up de-training for 15-months. At the end of this period my heart had shrunk back to a size that was on the upper limit of normal, but my heart rhythms were still abnormal. The consultant said he had no choice but to clinically diagnose me as having a Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. Just what I didn't want to hear! I now take Beta Blockers every day, which are there to ensure any irregular heart rhythms are controlled. The downside is that they reduce my heart rate to sub 40 at rest and cap it to a maximum of about 161.

In terms of running I finally got the all clear last summer to start doing a bit. The consultant's words were "you can do some sub-maximal training". When asked to clarify this he said it was "deliberately vague and you need to listen to your body". My view is that it means not running eyeballs out and making sure I'm always running well within my limits. As most of you will know, I'm back running with the club, but the restrictions and medications mean that I do find it very hard work. Not being able to push yourself hard on a regular basis means fitness is very difficult to sustain or improve.

Anyway back to my running properly. So here we are in 2006. I have the race numbers from every race I have entered and having just counted them there are 151. I've run 4 marathons, 31 half marathons, 20 ten milers. 62 races were fell and 89 road or multi-terrain. I suppose that makes me a road runner, gripes!

My best times are as follows:

Road

Marathon	3:01	Kinder Trog	2:13
Half Marathon	1:19	Kinder Downfall	1:29
10 Miles	1:02	Grindleford Gallop	2:56
10k	0:40	High Peak 40	6:45
5 Miles	0:31	Xmas Cracker	0:51
		Roaches	2:30

What does the future hold in store? Well I hope to do my first race for almost 3 years sometime soon. I aim to continue running with the Striders. And finally, watch out, because if they find a cure for a Cardiomyopathy or my consultant decides he's got the diagnosis wrong I'll be back faster than ever!

Mark Whelan

KIMM

At the time of printing this Alistair Fitzgerald and Paul Hunt will be half way through (hopefully) this years KIMM (Karrimor International Mountain Marathon). Good Luck!

AWAY DAYS

Following a recent committee meeting it was decided that the last Sunday in every month will be designated as an AWAY DAY SUNDAY. The proposal is that we meet at 8:00am on these days and drive out for our run. In most cases this will be within the surrounding area such as Kinder, Edale, White Peak, but on other occasions we will plan runs further afield.

**Just Remember the last Sunday in every month
8:00am.**

CURRY NIGHT

I've been asked to arrange a curry night for one Thursday night in November. Therefore I propose **THURSDAY 23RD NOVEMBER** at **8:30pm** following the mid-week run. The proposal is that we go to the Saffron in Disley.

XMAS CRACKER RACE

This years Xmas Cracker race takes place on Sunday 17th December 2006. For those new to the club this is the MUST DO race of the year. It's a multi terrain race where you are encouraged to run in fancy dress, although it's not compulsory. It starts at Meerbrook reservoir near leeks and goes over the Roaches. It's also a great venue for a family day out. Entry is £6.00 in advance or £7.00 on the day.

<http://www.runnersworld.co.uk/events/viewevent.asp?sp=&v=2&EN=34695>

Lost in France!

It was September; I was on holiday in France. You know the picture, you relax by walking up hills, cycling up hills, horse riding and doing insane challenges. A fell runner owns the Chalet where we were staying and when you arrive he tells you about the chalet challenges and after a few beers and a bit of false confidence you take up the challenge. After that there is no turning back, unless you want to spend the rest of the week in shame with the other guests that is! The one that caught my eye was an intense four-mile, 540 Metre climb run up and down the Col De Cou. You already start at 1390 Metres above sea level and the air is a little thinner to start with. I thought I'd leave it to the end of the week in order to adjust to the altitude of course!

I looked at the previous people in the book and noted that some looney had done it in 36:22. It did note that he was a marine though. The longest time was 1:04. I set a realistic goal for the day, the average time were at 50 Minutes, so my aim was to better that.

The challenge started from a quaint little picnic spot called Lac Mines D'or. I looked towards my goal, straining my neck I saw the Col De Cou. Well half of it anyway, the rest was hidden by low clouds. Mind you it could have been high clouds and it would have still hidden it. Hannah had come to cheer me on and motivate me. She called me a 'barm pot lunatic plonker'; I was hoping more for a 'go Shaun go'.

I started upwards, I was told to warm up on the first, easier third. I had been running up a steep, well-defined track for five minutes and was already out of breath. 'Where was the easier bit' I thought. After ten minutes the previous weeks indulgence of fine food and excellent wines were telling me I should have done this on Monday, when I was half a stone lighter. After a short while the track ended and I had to gingerly step over an electric fence to follow a rocky, wet path upwards. The going was tough and the visibility very poor. I was running in a blanket of mist and half expected my descent time to be about 1 min, after stepping off a cliff. Luckily I kept my head down and my feet moving forward. All around me were cowbells ringing, I could see no cows but they were there waiting.



Mound after mound presented itself to me and I offered myself to the mounds like a sacrificial lamb to the slaughter. Each time I started to run up one I half expected to be at the top - no such luck. My heart was pounding as loud as a base line from a hardcore dance track. Mixed with the cowbells and mist, it started to formulate a number one pop song in my head. The video could have dancing cows in tou-tous waving star shaped wands, and break dancing sheep spinning around in the mist. Delirium had set in! I concentrated hard and all of a sudden I was through the mist. What a transformation!

The sky was deep blue and below me I could see the peaks of all the high hills poking their heads above the clouds. Better still I could see the top of my hill. It was still quite a distance, but the newfound hope spurred me onwards with gusto.

At 34:23 I reached the summit, where there was a border control into Switzerland, I looked over into Switzerland and could not see the Vonn Trapp family so I headed downwards with 'The Hills Are Alive to the sound of music...' spinning round my head. The descent was harder than the ascent, it was indeed very steep and the soles of my feet were burning so much I thought that I'd need a skin graft when I got to the bottom. I skipped from rock to rock; I side stepped puddles and jumped muddy bogs with the sheer professionalism you would expect from a fell runner - ELECTRIC FENCE! At a moment notice I jumped over the fence, narrowly missing the fence and slipped on a verge on the other side and then carried on stumbling from rock to rock, splashing into the muddy puddles and flailing my arms like a bad trapeze artist on a tight rope. I passed some people, the only people I had seen on this run; oh how they felt sorry for me as I ran like a ponce downwards with fear in my eyes.

Hannah was awaiting my return and I took off my trainers and submerged my feet into the lake, I half expected the lake to dry up and emit steam into the air!

I was pleased with my overall time of 47:22, so much that I decided to celebrate with a glass or two of wine when I returned to the chalet. I looked back at the mist-covered peak of the 'Col De Cou' and thought about my next challenge- Snowdon - maybe?

Shaun Coram

XMAS DRINKS

For those that want to join the Striders for a Christmas drink or two, we will be meeting at the Navigation Inn, Buxsworth on Friday 15th December from 8:00pm onwards. We will also make the draw for the London marathon place on the night. See you there?

BULLOCK SMITHY

Congratulations to Paul Hunt, Kevin Day and Steve Hennessey who all successfully completed this years Bullock Smithy. The event which starts and finishes in Hazel Grove is 56 miles long and takes in Chinley Churn, Edale, Castleton, Three Shires Head, Bollington and many other places. Well done also to Alistair Fitzgerald who accompanied his brother Mark for a mere 30miles! Times as follows:

Paul Hunt (25 th)	13 hours 50 mins
Kevin Day (16 th)	13 hours 03 mins
Steve Hennessey (16 th)	13 hours 03 mins

Pictures are on the website.

AGM

This is advance notice of the AGM which will take place on Friday 26th January 2007. We were going to hold it at the Shady Oak this year but it has recently closed. We're currently looking for an alternative venue and will let you know the outcome of this. Wherever it is we will have the usual prize giving for the year followed by a meal. I soon as more information is available I will let people know.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Attendances at the championship races have been good over the summer and the whole series has been the best for a few years. Andy Butler is heading the race for the title, but the battle for second and third place is still tight.

Current standings

Name	Races	Points
Andy Butler	10	199
Kevin Day	9	157
Peter Hill	10	156
Steve Hennessey	8	146
Jonathan Hull	6	110
Stephen Sanders	4	59
Shaun Coram	3	52
Paul Hunt	3	39
Mark Richards	2	34
Dave Bowen	2	33
Sarah Ledbury	2	28
Dave Arden	1	20
Alistair Fitzgeralds	1	19
Philomena Smith	1	17
Alex Ledbury	1	16
Hannah Coram	1	14
Karl Smith	1	14
Steve Berry	1	13
Tim Newton	1	12
Julia Easter	1	12

There are 14 races in total and your best 10 count towards your total score. There are three races left; the Langley 7, The Roaches and the Stockport 10. Further details about the races can be found on page 28.

Killer Marathon – Death March

A few people have mentioned that they are considering forming a team for the High Peak Marathon early next year. I therefore thought that now would be a good time to share my experience of last year's race.

I heard about the HPM a few years ago when a friend told me that he'd once done a race in a team of four that was so bad that he'd stopped, couldn't restart and ended up crying. Then, in October 2005 I stumbled across the race website and armed with a little more information pondered whether I had it in me to rise to this particular challenge. All things considered, it couldn't be any worse than getting lost in the nettles with Pete could it? I decided to find out.

Just to put you in the picture; the philosophy behind the race is to take one of the most challenging navigational circuits, across forty two miles of peat bogs and pathless moorland terrain, and then to add some extra dynamics. The first is that the race is organised in the middle of winter, the second is that it takes place in the middle of the night.

I somehow managed to persuade three others to join me. My brother Mark was the first. Then Francis Smedley, a fellow Strider who lives in London but was born in Buxton, and finally Martin Thomson, another old friend from Buxton. Once I had them on board, I started to feel a sense of responsibility for their, and my, potential demise. so I decided to start the recce process in earnest and to have a look at the toughest sections first. The traverse across Bleaklow is the heart of this event and I struck upon the idea of attempting an early crossing from Cut Gate to the Snake Road with one of my team mates, Martin.

I figured that if we couldn't cross it in darkness with fresh legs, then we wouldn't stand a chance with twenty miles in our legs in the middle of the night. So one January night, we ran into the early evening laughing like children, slightly nervous but slightly excited at about 3pm. Without a path to follow and with absolutely nothing to use as a landmark to navigate, nightfall came quickly. We were literally like lambs to the slaughter but I was genuinely surprised how quickly we ended up in real trouble. Within only a few hours we were properly lost and unable to see anything apart from bogs all around us. The random wooden stakes which appear to be dotted infrequently at various parts of the route had long since disappeared and we were, beyond all shadow of a doubt, totally lost. At least it was a clear night, if a little cold. No sooner had that particular thought entered my mind when a freezing fog that literally meant we couldn't see our feet emerged very suddenly. To keep things short, suffice to say that a GPS unit (for use recording distance and not navigation) was our only hope and with patience, careful use of the unit and a compass, and with more luck than judgement, we eventually emerged over a fence onto the Snake Road closer to midnight than our intended 6 or 7pm. It had been a warning of what we could expect if we continued with this daft venture.

After a long discussion, following which Mark decided he would give it a miss, myself, Francis, Martin and an excellent, Bob Grahame-stand in called Jim decided to give it a go after all. Just prior to the race, I sought support from my Strider-friends. Steve said he thought it was "only a race for nutcases" and Pete lent me a book in which the author, Mike Cuddahay, pointed out that when the event had been founded it had been reported in a number of newspapers as an inappropriately dangerous event, under headlines including "Killer Marathon Death March".

Mike Cuddahay also said in his book (and these words stuck!) "The catalogue of misfortune and suffering associated with this deliberately perverse event required a whole separate book". As ever I was grateful for the unswerving support of my good friends Pete and Steve

All in all, I was worried about a number of things, but terrible weather was not really one of them. However, a few days before the race, in early March, we started to experience some very cold weather. Then on the night of the race it started to snow. And it didn't stop. We were due to start shortly after 11pm but by 7pm a blizzard had taken hold that prevented Martin from getting to Disley to collect me. I was sure the race was cancelled but asked Martin to persist just in case. Eventually, he arrived and at about 9pm we set off for Edale. En route I was further reassured that the race would be cancelled when we encountered a car near to Rushup Edge that we had to push as it had become stuck. Surely other teams couldn't make it even if the organisers could! At about 9.45 we arrived at the Village Hall nevertheless. The car park was full! I was worried. When we got inside, it was packed. Had nobody told them about the weather? I frantically looked for the "event cancelled" or the "bad weather route" sign. To my dismay (this is an honest account) it wasn't there and then an announcement was made to the effect that the last marshalls had reached their checkpoints. "If they can get there then you can, so the race is on" was what was said. I then realised I was stood next to Ranulp Fiennes and he was limbering up, still with a finger missing from a North Pole adventure! I popped to the toilet.

At 11.07 we set off into the cold, dark, hushed stillness of the night. I pretended to sprain an ankle as we left the car park but it was no good. Soon we were climbing and within no time we were on the ridge. As we descended from Lose Hill I had a look behind. Hundreds of headlights in a procession along the tops was a very surreal sight and inspired us to get a good start. Francis was definitely keener than me though and by the time we had climbed Winn Hill a few sharp words had been exchanged about the pace. We steadied ourselves as we headed up to Stanage and seemed not to be losing much time to the much faster teams behind us, who had a later start time. By Moscar we were a few hours in and relieved to hear that we were in about fifth place. Possibly a little too long spent at the checkpoint combined with nearly getting run over by some disapproving and speeding clubbers returning from a night out in Sheffield slowed us a little, but some fortuitous navigating saw us gain ground as we headed along Derwent Edge. After that it all becomes a little blurred as I strain to recollect the events. I can tell you that by Margery Hill the sharp wind and deep snow made the going extremely uncomfortable. And it was cold; colder, perhaps, than I have ever experienced. The web site buxtonweather.co.uk has been established for about five years. If you look at the coldest day it says 3 March 2006; the date of the HPM. It was -8.1C in Buxton. I have no idea how cold it was on Bleaklow but it was definitely colder and walking was not an option. I was grateful for the very stringent kit check and I tried to take my mind of the discomfort by settling into my ipod (Arctic Monkeys of course!) with compass in hand as we went into the early hours.

Water was a problem as the tubes to our platypuses quickly froze, and then the water bottles themselves iced over, but there was always the snow to eat!

Then one team got into trouble when a competitor broke his leg. In the exceptionally bad conditions Mountain Rescue couldn't attempt a rescue so an RAF Sea King Helicopter was scrambled to save the day (or night). Apparently, he had wanted to keep going with his broken leg and was embarrassed about causing any trouble!

When the morning came it was a beautiful sight to behold. Never have I willed daybreak so hard or been so grateful for the start of a new day. In a strange way doing an event like this helps you to appreciate the things that you take for granted. The camaraderie amongst the team was very high, particularly for me, when my two brothers turned up in support when we arrived at the Snake Road. Traversing Kinder and Brown Knoll to Lords Seat was truly wonderful. Throughout the course the marshals, all students from Sheffield University and mostly female, were brilliant and definitely kept us going.

Eventually after about twelve hours we emerged in seventh place. Our finishing time was 12.18. It appears that 11.43 would have got us second so we were very pleased (personally I would have settled with just finishing). Not a bad first attempt by a predominantly Striders team.

So would I recommend this event or do it again? I think I'll reserve judgement. But if you're looking for a long, arduous, navigational challenge that will push you to your limits and beyond, then look no further. But don't say you haven't been warned. Oh, and if you do go, take an extra jumper.

Alistair Fitzgerald

RESULTS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 16th LANTERN PIKE

1	Andy Butler	41:36	5	Alex Ledbury	47:37
2	Steve Hennessey	42:35	6	Stephen Sanders	49:20
3	Jonathan Hull	43:20	7	Peter Hill	51:54
4	Dave Bowen	45:24	8	Paul Hunt	53:18

SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST MACCLESFIELD HALF MARATHON

1	Andy Butler	1:30:03	5	Paul Hunt	1:55:54
2	Kevin Day	1:35:00	6	Sarah Ledbury	1:58:58
3	Peter Hill	1:46:46	7	Karl Smith	2:04:19
4	Philomena Smith	1:52:27			

Remaining Races

Langley 7

SAT NOV 4 LANGLEY 7 2:30pm

From Langley, Macclesfield. More Information From Tim Stock, 27 Fountain Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire. Entry £5 in advance or £7 on the day. Entry forms on the Macclesfield Harriers Website.

The Roaches

SUN NOV 12 THE ROACHES BL 10:30am 15m/3700'

From The Village Hall, Meerbrook, Nr Leek, Staffordshire, (GR 987608) Entry fee £3.50 on day only

Stockport 10

SUN DEC 1 STOCKPORT 10 11:00am From Woodbank Park, Stockport. Entry fee £10.00 in advance (£2+ on the day). T-Shirt to all finishers.

Striders at the Relays

By Kevin Day

The 2006 British Fell and Hill Running Relay Championships took place in mid October at The Castle Carr Estate in the Luddenden Valley near Hebden Bridge. This was the 3rd time we had entered a team into the relays, the club's previous efforts were in 2000 at Edale when the team finished 79th out of 80 finishers mainly due to the navigation team having a few problems and in 2004 at Hayfield when the second leg pair had to retire due to injury.

This year's relays ran to the same format as the Hayfield relays, in that it was a solo leg to start and finish with and the paired legs in the middle.

The courses were tough, but this was to be expected. The 1st and 4th legs were the same route at 5.9 miles with 1480' ascent, but run in opposite directions. Alex Ledbury ran the 1st leg while Dave Arden ran the 4th leg. The 2nd leg was 9.4 miles with 2350' ascent and this was run by Steve Hennessey and me. The 3rd leg was a navigational leg of about 6/7 miles with 1000' ascent visiting 7 check points on route; this was run very well by Andy Butler and Alistair Fitzgerald.

It was a lovely Saturday and the conditions on the day were good for running. The weather was dry with mist on the high ground reducing visibility, but not enough to cause any problems; at about 2pm the mist cleared leaving clear blue skies and sunshine.

The opposition teams were very strong and contained plenty of the top hill and fell runners; up against this type of competition we had no great expectations except do our best and finish.

Out of the 118 teams that started the day, 3 teams failed to finish and 4 teams were disqualified on the navigation leg. We finished 63rd overall out of the 111 finishers and 40th out of 61 teams in our category. Every member of the team gave 150% on the day and this resulted in our very well deserved placing.

Bingley Harriers were 1st team home in 3:44:53 followed by Mercia Fell Runners and last year's winners Dark Peak finished 4th. We finished in a time of 5:00:49 and the last team came home in 7:02:54. Our team can be very proud of its performance.

Next year the relays are once again close by at Bowland near Clitheroe, so I hope we can once again enter and maybe even have two teams in the event. Make a note in your diaries that they will be held about Saturday 13th October 2007.

2007 Club Championship

A bit premature, but these are the preliminary races for next year, so you can start planning now!

1	Tigger Tor	8	Offerton 10k
2	Cloud Nine	9	Peak Forest
3	Kinder Downfall	10	Lantern Pike
4	Eyam	11	Spire 10
5	Rainow	12	Langley 7
6	Boars Head	13	The Roaches
7	Round the Ressers	14	Stockport 10

Confirmation will be given in January 2007

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		
POSTAL ADDRESS																Day	Month	Year
TOWN																POSTAL CODE ESSENTIAL		
COUNTY																HOME TELEPHONE (STD 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

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