

STRUGGLER'S POST



Born to run ..? BY HELEN GOUGH

I have an injury. Not just any injury. A sports injury! I never thought I'd say that, but now as a runner (of 8 weeks) I am proud to say that I've pulled something due to exercise, as opposed to hurting something due to clumsiness. However, this does not deter me and I will, along with the 15 or so remaining beginners, be completing our 10 week programme shortly, at which point I will run, walk or limp around 3 miles and weirdly find it, fun. Of course the rest of you Strugglers reading this were probably born wearing Lycra and fluorescent bibs and just able to run. Or so it seems as we watch with awe at the 'just 6 miles tonight' runners returning each week, speaking coherently after just a second or two's rest.

The last 8 weeks have been a bit of a revelation. I found myself on New Year's Eve, surrounded by seasoned runners, resolving to run a mile (just one, without stopping) for the first time in my life, in 2013, knowing full well I'd mentally set myself this goal for the last 20 years. On many occasions I had quietly taken myself off for a bit of a jog, deciding to build it up slowly, no-one looking, then being shocked at how utterly unfit I was (struggling to get to the end of the road), returning purple and deciding I was somehow not designed like other people and would certainly die if I tried it again. However, one very cold night in early January I joined a group of equally hesitant people at the Julie Academy of Pain and discovered there were other people thinking they were the most unfit person in the world. After our first run I was ready to head off home, feeling all energised, only to hear that we had only completed the warm up. I was right, Julie was pitching this at people way above my level. Several walk/run laps of Parklands later, we jogged back to base and we had all survived. We vowed to complete the 10 weeks and there has been no stopping us since. The weeks have been fun and varied and as a group it is clear to see that we have progressed considerably. And this has been the secret for me. Although I was always previously sure that running was a thing to do quietly when no-one was looking, the reality is, the motivation generated by running with a group and the enthusiasm of coach Julie, has proved to me that running in a group is the way to go. The sharing of the injury stories, the chats in the market the day after, the irritated husband who spent years trying to enthruse me about running....all part of the enjoyment.

Pub Quiz

18th May - Coaching Inn. To raise money for the North Devon Hospice as a combined effort for those doing the North Devon Half/Marathon. £5 per person, teams of up to 6 people. **Book your table now** - speak to Julie Colman

There has been much to learn too. First there is the equipment. One evening I set off for a run armed with emergency ID wrist band, MP3 player (still trying to master the art of keeping earphones in when running), Garmin (other brands are available), reflective armbands, hat, gloves, sports bra... and it did make me wonder if I should've taken up something less complicated, like hang-gliding. Then there came 'the bad run'. I'm told everyone has them. Things all seem to be going well and then you have an off night when your legs feel like lead, an elephant is sitting on your chest and you wonder what went wrong. However assured by all that this is normal, and a dear friend told me 'it's to stop you getting too cocky', I tried not to be put off. Next I found myself browsing the running magazines in the supermarket and reading running blogs. The lesson was, take no notice, it's not humanly possible to do many of the things these people claim they do. They are not normal. Final lesson, don't be disappointed when you wake up and discover you haven't actually run a marathon, it was all a dream, and will remain so. Note to self, you are a beginner.

Sunday 3rd February 2013 was my milestone day, literally, when I ran my first ever non-stop mile. I'm afraid I interrupted Julie's weekend yet again to share this momentous news with her. Milestone number 2 was achieving my first PB! I decided to check out Parkrun one Saturday in Barnstaple. It was wet, cold and pretty miserable but undeterred by the dog-walker who shouted 'I haven't seen you running yet' I completed the 5k and gained my first PB. I was delighted to have 'run' 5k in just a few seconds less than I could've walked it. Not so chuffed to be classified as 'Veteran' at such a young age. A couple of us have now done the Parkrun and hope to keep on challenging ourselves over the next few months to run the full distance. We would welcome any company, as long as you're also a veteran, having an off day.

Well, whether I run or limp the 5k on week 10, I shall keep up with the running and try to enjoy it (I shouldn't have put that in writing). I am sure all the beginners would agree in saying thank you to everyone at the club for supporting us and making us welcome and thank you to Julie and her assistant coaches for their unswerving enthusiasm and encouragement to keep us all going to achieve our various personal goals. Keep running!

Coaching Corner - Sue's top tip

Pain when running is a signal from your body that something is wrong and rest is usually the best treatment.

If you have something to say that would interest other members and would like to write an article then please speak to Julie Colman or Richard Connett or email us at the address below.

The deadline for the next issue is **Friday 29th March.**

From the (Young) Horse's mouth (/keyboard)

BY PAUL COOKE

Unsure of what to write first after being 'volunteered' into this, I figured the only nugget of insight I could offer was into my biggest running joy: races.

When I started running in 2007, I was motivated by a desire to improve my fitness, lose weight and ultimately: be a better footballer! I'm not sure how realistic the third aim was, but I certainly never imagined I would go the distance (!) I have with running, or that it would become my 'sport' of choice. I love competition but am not really concerned with winning (which is probably best), and the great thing with running races is, it doesn't matter where you come. Really, it's true. In football, there is a winner and a loser, and I hate losing! In running races, while there is a winner, the old adage "it's not the winning but the taking part" is absolutely, 100% true.

Last year I ran 12 races and 3 relays, every streetlights and one bridge run (c.200 miles worth! But who's counting...). Yet I won none, not even a top 5 placing (or even the streetlights sweepstake!). But...I felt fantastic! Completing a race provides a buzz and sense of achievement that no leisurely run can. It feels great to be part of team SMS and there is often a real camaraderie between finishers, especially on the more undulating off-road runs.

In fact, I would go as far as to say that entering a variety of running races made me feel like I really accomplished a lot in my 2012; so much so that I have been giving some pretty serious thought to trying to set up a new race and 'give something back' as it were. I'm not sure how easy I will find it to leave my sexy knee-high blue socks at home and not race it though...

Not having kids/weekend work/injuries, it has been easy for me to race fairly regularly and no doubt in future it will become trickier. But as those of you who are reading this are running anyway, even if socially motivated, I cannot recommend highly enough trying to fit a race or two in this year. They aren't just for the 'hardcore', they can provide serious milestones (just ask Chris Simpson!) and it is important we support local races so clubs continue to put them on; and keep them well stocked with jelly babies!



View From the Treatment Room

A hypothetical runner having run regularly and sensibly for 2 years will find significant changes in his/her life.

Physical benefits such as weight loss, a more toned body, more energy, happier, better sleep, better libido, lower resting heart rate will be experienced. In addition running should feel easier; more flowing, more bouncy. The reason for this is that the body has developed a more efficient shock absorption system to cope with the demands placed upon it.

Shock is absorbed by the skeletal bones and the soft tissues, such as muscles, ligaments tendons and fascia.

This occurs as the result of having stressed the body and the body successfully adapting. Overstressing the system will lead to overload and injury. Success is finding the right mix between exercise and rest.

It is therefore important to seek advice from coaches and trainers if you are starting running especially if your fitness base is poor and if you like me are past the first flush of youth!

However no matter how careful you are niggles and injuries are part of the package. In the next article I will talk about issues relating to the lower back an area that potentially can be the centre of discomfort and disability in running.

Happy training.

Jonathan Lawrence

Upcomming Fixtures

20th Mar	Streetlights
1st Apr	Bampton 8
7th Apr	Taunton Half

Results

Bideford Half

MIKE CLARK	01:24:17 PB
RICHARD HORN	01:33:43
RICHARD CONNETT	01:37:17 PB
ELAINE FIELDS	01:38:39 PB 2ND IN CAT
TINA MCCrackEN	01:45:17 PB
CAROLINE SHAPLAND	1:49:15
SARAH ROGERS	02:17:27
JON HIBBERD	02:35:08

An interview with ... ELAINE FIELDS

- How/why did you start running?**
I wanted to run the London marathon
- How old were you when you started running?**
34
- Your pre race fuel?**
Toast and Jam
- Recovery food/drink?**
Roast
- Any pre race superstitions?**
No
- Make of running shoe?**
Asics or Saucony
- Favourite race – and why?**
Forest Flyer – just loved it!
- Sporting idol?**
Jess Ennis
- Recurring injuries?**
None
- Running aspirations?**
PBs
- Any other sports/activities?**
No
- Why do you run?**
To keep fit
- Best running achievement?**
Qualifying for London Marathon
- Closest club rival?**
Phil Pennington
- Favourite biscuit?**
Chocolate Digestive
- Best excuse for not running?**
Its raining
- Who do you nominate for next months interview?**
Richard Westcott

ND Relay Dates

24th April	Braunton
15th May	South Molton
5th June	Torrington
26th June	Bideford
17th July	Tarka Tennis

Race Report

BIDEFORD HALF

Congratulations to the Strugglers who took part in the Bideford half marathon on the 3rd March.

Conditions proved pretty good for running fast times, cold but not too much wind on the exposed sections of the Tarka trail.

Mike Clark was the first Struggler home coming 44th overall in his first half marathon. Elaine Fields slashed 3 minutes off her PB on the way to securing the trophy for 2nd lady over 40.

Also deserving a special mention is Jon Hibberd who completed the race despite having pulled his hamstring during the previous club night.

The runners all appreciated the support provided by Jack and Simon who turned up at various locations around the course, showing real commitment on such a cold day.