

# STRUGGLER'S POST



## My First Marathon BY SARAH ROGERS

Having been running since the beginning of 2007 I thought it was about time to tackle a marathon! I've never been an "athletic" person; the only way I could get through team games like hockey was to jog around at the back, hoping no one was going to hit the ball towards me, yet doing enough to avoid being picked on by the teacher. I still live with the horror of the sports day 1500 metres (which you had to do if you were rubbish at everything else) – luckily most people had gone home bored by the time I finished, so it was just me, and the fat girl with asthma, panting slowly towards the finish line.

Between school and 2007 I'd never seriously considered doing any sport, unless you count skittles, until events came together to shame me into doing some exercise. First of all, my mum, who'd always been fit and active had a severe stroke which left her with very limited mobility; secondly, two work colleagues dragged me out on a run while we were away on a course, and I ended up heaving in a gutter in York (we'd run about a mile); and thirdly, someone who I knew through work congratulated me and asked when the baby was due – my youngest was 3! Time to do something about it...

Over the years I've done a number of races, starting with the Bideford Half Marathon. That nearly killed me – I had to take the day off sick afterwards as I could barely walk and had "digestive" issues - and I'm not talking biscuits. Finally, in 2012 I decided that it was time to do a marathon! I entered the New Forest Marathon in September as it looked quite flat, and was months away. But disaster struck in July when I ignored my core and hurt my back so badly I could barely walk, let alone run - that put me out of action for 6 weeks. As I'd only managed to get up to 8 miles by the day of the race I decided that doing the Half was a much better idea, so marathon plans were put on hold for another year.

In 2013 I looked around for a marathon to enter. The Salisbury Trail Marathon had good reviews on Runners World and looked very scenic, but what really swung it for me was the 8 ½ hour cut off time. I didn't really consider how hot it would be this Summer! I downloaded a training plan from the internet and began...all went well for the first 8 weeks; I'd got up to 16 miles and had felt really comfortable doing that distance, but then I picked up a lingering bug which went on...and on...

By the time I was feeling better I was running out of time, so only managed one long run (19 miles), and had to split that into 2 shorter runs, one first thing, and one starting at lunchtime.

On the morning of the marathon it tipped down, and I was dreading a wet run, but it soon cleared up. The race itself was very well organised with parking right next to the start. There were a number of distances being run, starting with those doing the 50K. Usually at the start of a race most of the other runners disappear in a cloud of dust, but all those starting at the back with me took it really easy, and the paths were quite congested until we'd been up round Old Sarum.

From about 3 miles on I ran with a lady from Chicago who was also tackling her first marathon. The terrain was undulating as we visited the countryside south of Salisbury, but very pretty and completely different to Devon! The hills weren't as steep as we're used to, but went on forever, or so it seemed. Underfoot varied between fields of stubble, grassy fields, fields full of cows(!) and cowpats, and gravel tracks. The water stations were frequent which was great as it got hotter and hotter. Cake was available, but I stayed with my tried and tested sports nutrition solution – Rice Krispie Marshmallow Squares - and bananas.

It seemed to take forever to get to the halfway point. I'd decided that as I'd missed out on so many long runs, my goal was just to get round in one piece, and still be able to walk the following day. So I plodded on, and enjoyed the scenery, which included an ancient yew forest. At one stage we crossed over a main road, but I can't even remember that bit! There was never a time when there was no other runner in sight, and at about 18 miles we ran with a couple of the 50k runners, one of whom had taken a tumble on a downhill section and was injured. They provided encouragement, and most importantly, sweets!

When we reached Salisbury racecourse I thought the end was in sight, but it turned out to be nowhere near Salisbury! Just before Wilton I stopped to empty all the stones and earth out of my shoes, before heading towards home. The final part of the route was mainly flat and took us along tracks and roads on the south side of Salisbury – this was the most difficult part of all, as my legs were starting to really hurt by then. It hurt to run, but it was even more painful to walk, so I just plodded on as best I could. Then, the cathedral, and a lot of bemused tourists, and along the river. By this time my Garmin was reading 26 miles, but the finish was still nowhere to be seen, and I had no idea where I was. I stopped for a couple of minutes to give directions to a coach load of foreign tourists looking for the coach park, and then I was off again!

Finally, after 26.88 miles (according to Garmin) I found a road, a marshal, and the finish, where my family had gathered to cheer me on over the line! My husband had come along with my auntie and uncle so they could take the children home if he needed to take me to hospital. HMMMMMMMM...

My time of 5:48:55 was nothing to shout about, but I'm just so pleased I got round with no ill effects. Did I enjoy it? It was nice when it stopped! Would I do another marathon? Maybe...

## Notices

### Christmas Party 2013

This years Strugglers Christmas party will be on Saturday 14th December and will be held at Highbullen Hotel. Phil will be taking names of people who want to come soon, a deposit will be required.

### 2013 Struggle T-Shirt design competition - Result

We have a winner in the design competition. Many thanks to Ross for his 7 entries! With no other entrants Ross was the clear winner, so well done fella!

### Andrew's Rectory Run and Buffet

Andrew's annual run and buffet from the rectory in Bishops Nympton had a great turn out and included a ceremonial run past in honour of Barnaby Batchelor. This was the last time Andrew will be holding the event so we'd like to thank him and his wife for their fantastic hospitality over the years. Andrew promises he will keep running with the club!



### Sciatica Part 2: Disc Disease

BY JONATHAN LAWRENCE

Intervertebral discs are cushions of cartilage that lie between the vertebrae of the spine.

Their job is to absorb mechanical stress and give flexibility to the spine.

In a young person the discs are well hydrated and flexible but as one gets older they lose fluid and shrink. They are also vulnerable to prolapsing where they may rupture and any fluid from within the disc may leak. Sometimes this does not cause any major symptoms, but if they are close to or touch one of the nerves, which exit the spine, they can cause major pain and disability.

The most vulnerable discs are at the base of the spine and when prolapsed can cause sciatic like pains in the leg, with weakness too. A doctor or manipulative therapist can make diagnosis. MRI scans can also help determine the degree of injury.

It can take 3 to 6 months to heal, although this can be lessened through massage or manipulation. Rarely surgery may be necessary.

Core exercises as part of your training and regular checks of your spinal mechanics with a trained therapist can help to prevent disc problems by reducing any predisposing mechanical stresses.

Prevention is better than cure! Happy running.

### Results

#### Totnes 10k

MIKE CLARK	00:40:12
PAUL MORGAN	00:42:37
CHRIS MURRIN	00:46:55
PAUL BRAYLEY	00:48:33
CLAIRE CAMPBELL	00:49:40
KEITH MCNEILL	01:02:41
JACK FRIENDSHIP	01:05:14
ROSS DENNIS	01:05:26
JON HIBBERD	01:12:42

#### Jurassic Coast 10k

MIKE CLARK	00:38:38
PAUL MORGAN	00:41:18
CLAIRE CAMPBELL	00:45:49
CHRIS MURRIN	00:46:43
PAUL BRAYLEY	00:47:04
ROSS DENNIS	01:02:37

#### Quarrymans Run

(TIMES YET TO BE PUBLISHED)

PAUL COOKE	<b>WINNER</b>
CHRIS SIMPSON	
RICHARD CONNETT	
TINA MCCRACKEN	

#### Forest Flyer Five

RICHARD CONNETT	00:35:59
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### Upcomming Fixtures

14th Sept	Landkey 10k
25th Sept	Three Bridges
29th Sept	Doone Run
29th Sept	Taunton 10k
12th Oct	Bideford Bay 50k
13th Oct	Castle Cary 10k
16th Oct	Streetlights
20th Oct	Stagger/Stumble
27th Oct	The Struggle

### An interview with ...

*RICHARD CONNETT*

- 1. How/why did you start running?** Ran a bit at school but then got lazy and stopped for a while. Started again in mid 20s and after sorting out my runners knee here I am.
- 2. How old were you when you started running?** 8 - teacher Mr Legg had a cross country club at school.
- 3. Your pre race fuel?** Weetabix (other wheaty breakfast cereals are available)
- 4. Recovery food/drink?** Pint or 2 of milk
- 5. Any pre race superstitions?** No
- 6. Make of running shoe?** Asics
- 7. Favourite race – and why?** Hartland Hartbreaker - Evil hills, cracking scenery.
- 8. Sporting idol?** Brownlee Brothers
- 9. Recurring injuries?** Runners knee, only get it on road marathons these days it seems.
- 10. Running aspirations?** Eyeing up the full ironman, maybe.
- 11. Any other sports/activities?** Badminton, swimming, cycling, chess.
- 12. Why do you run?** Keeps me right in the head and burns off some of the chocolate, crisps and doughnuts.
- 13. Best running achievement?** North Devon Marathon, got PB beating my London time.
- 14. Closest club rival?** Nik
- 15. Favourite biscuit?** Chocolate Hobnob.
- 16. Best excuse for not running?** Excuses are for wimps
- 17. Who do you nominate for next months interview?** Phil - should have done it this month but without Julie around to sort things out I left it too late to ask him. Sorry Phil.