

Hash 141 - The Ridgeway Relay, 22nd June 2003

Sunday is a day of rest. A long lie-in, with all the concomitant pleasures that can bring - breakfast in bed, the Sunday papers etc etc - and the languid bath before slowly dressing and leaving the house just in time to arrive 5 minutes late for the Hash every other week.

So what on earth was I doing driving Mad Mike Fisher down the M4 at 8 o'clock, having arisen to the sound of flatulent sparrows cowering in the pissing rain several hours earlier? The answer, of course, is that we were hurrying to get to somewhere near Essex, so that the afore-mentioned ex-GOM could be warmed up and ready to take over the baton

from Laura at the end of the first stage of the Ridgeway Relay. In the event, we could have had a second cup of coffee and a third slice of toast, since Laura, poor dear, had gone charging off like a mad bull down completely the wrong trail on stage 1, and wound up aggravating the locals by knocking them up to ask where the Ridgeway was. All we met at the changeover point in Wendover, was her chauffeur Ian - calves throbbing in with worry - and a couple of shivering, dispirited marshals who wanted to get out of the cold and rain to a warm bath. One or two stragglers emerged from the gloom, but where was our golden girl who had been overtaking everyone when last spotted? The marshals took pity on Mike and sent him off before Laura eventually turned up 15 minutes after the penultimate runner - and ran straight past us in her enthusiasm.

Well-known as the Hash poet, Ian conjured up the loneliness of the long-distance runner which would haunt the next four of us, as Mike chugged up the long rise out of Wendover. We all drove off to the next checkpoint, where Keith 2 was champing at the bit. Mike performed heroically to knock a full fifteen minutes off his practice time, but the other 34 runners had long since disappeared in a south-westerly direction by the time Keith 2 was able to slip his leash. By now the sun was starting to chew through the clouds, and it was a bare-torsoed Keith 2 who appeared at the end of stage 3 to send your scribe off on his leg.

Someone once wrote something about mad dogs and Englishmen out in the midday sun, and it was precisely noon when I started, in 25°C and me wiv me dicky Achilles wot I had utterly horlicksed when checking the trail for today's (Froxfield) Hash. The first 6 miles were OK-ish being, completely flat, but the last mile was up and down and up again some very steep hills, which I confess (since there were plenty of Hashing witnesses) I walked up. Was I shamed to be told that the penultimate contestant had run all the way up - a 60 year-old pensioneress with a heart condition - no I wasn't, I was past caring. It turned out that two geriatrics on crutches had managed to run even slower than me, but Ian was still a long way last when I handed over.


Mike, Katrina and I then drove to South Stoke, ostensibly to welcome Ian back, but in reality to get outside a few large pints - and passed Laura standing on the roadside touting unsuccessfully for business. She turned up at the pub in good time for us all to see Ian finish - star man - *not* in last place! The old sweetheart had made up 15 minutes on his leg, to beat a Reading veteran into last place.

The mass start for leg 6 had set off at approximately the same time that Ian had started leg 5, so we missed the ephemeral Jason by a long chalk, and Steve was already on leg 7 by the time Ian had got his well-merited beer down him. The 5 of us sped off to Hinton Parva in the hope of seeing Paul finishing and/or Jeremy's mass start, but we were somewhat handicapped by the lack of an OS map and missed it all by about 10 minutes. By this time I could have fallen asleep standing up in a cupboard, so chickened out and went home for a quick zzz. But the indefatigable Ian & Laura made it to Barbury Castle to see Jeremy hand over to the redoubtable GOMargaret, and all the runners bar Steve (where *were* you?), together with many supporters and drivers, were there at the finish to cheer our heroine home in Marlborough.

I have to say that I was really moved by the camaraderie of the whole day, and the support that we gave each other. The KVHHH is not a 'serious' running (and walking!) club, as you may have noticed. We are there for the fresh air, and the exercise, and the

beautiful countryside, and the beer, and the friendship. And we were up against much younger 'serious' - but very friendly - runners, who could keep up 6-minute miles for an hour-and-a-half or more. So we were in it for fun, and for the taking part. No doubt Jeremy will be distributing the facts and figures in due course, but who gives a tish about who came where? Very English no doubt (sorry Ian & Margaret), but it's the taking part that counts, and we gave a decent account of ourselves. As we sat, runners and supporters alike, in the utterly vile & detestable Royal Oak afterwards, chatting about our individual trials and tribulations, and very occasional and minor successes (GOM thought she was running 6 miles but they'd changed the leg to 9 miles), we all agreed what a good day we had had, and what a lot fun it had all been.

Many, many thanks to: Jeremy for organising it; to the barmy runners for doing it; to the drivers and supporters without whom &c.; and especially to Ian & Laura for being omnipresent and cheering everyone on. Here's to 2004 (memo to self - get head examined) (and get guide dog for Laura!).



Second Coming Hash Runs

142 - 29th June - The Pelican, Froxfield - Keith1

143 - 13th July - Savernake Forest run, picnic & general knees-up#

144 - 27th July - Square & Compasses, Worth Matravers, GOM & Dave

145 - 10th August - Bruce Arms, Milton Lilbourne - Laura

146 - 24th August - The Bugger's Arms - Paul

147 - 7th Sept - The Bakers Arms, Somerford Keynes - Steve

148 - 21st Sept - The Bugger's Arms - Katrina

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where the Bugger's Arms is please ring GOMargaret on 01793 703744, or email her secretary on paulbtracy@hotmail.com

(Hash, geddit??!!) Meet @ picnic site by Wootton Rivers turning at usual time. Bring your own picnic, booze, kids, umbrellas etc. In Town Hall if wet.

Ridgeway Relay 22 June 2003

Team and Overall Results

Stage	Stage Name	Runner	Time	Distance in Miles	Time per Mile	Runner Position	Team Position
1	Ivinghoe Beacon to Wendover	Laura	2:03:27	11.7	10:33	35	35
2	Wendover to Princes Risborough	Mike	1:04:25	5.3	12:15	35	35
3	Princes Risborough to Kingston Blount	Keith P	1:22:24	7.7	10:44	33	35
4	Kingston Blount to Swyncombe Church	Keith M	1:29:31	7.2	12:28	33	35
5	Swyncombe Church to South Stoke	Ian	1:36:06	10.1	9:32	25	34
6	South Stoke to West Ilsley	Jason	1:39:21	10.3	9:33	26	34
7	West Ilsley to Wantage	Steve	1:17:32	9.1	8:33	22	34
8	Wantage to Charlbury Hill	Paul	1:25:49	7.8	10:56	35	34
9	Charlbury Hill to Barbury Castle	Jeremy	1:32:32	10.7	8:41	27	33
10	Barbury Castle to Marlborough	Margaret	1:31:26	9.3	9:46	31	34

	Roll of Honour based on individual speed	Time per Mile
1	Steve	8:33
2	Jeremy	8:41
3	Ian	9:32
4	Jason	9:33
5	Margaret	9:46
6	Laura	10:33
7	Keith P	10:44
8	Paul	10:56
9	Mike	12:15
10	Keith M	12:28

	Roll of Honour based on individual placing	Runner Position
1	Steve	22
2	Ian	25
3	Jason	26
4	Jeremy	27
5	Margaret	31
6	Keith P	33
7	Keith M	33
8	Laura	35
9	Paul	35
10	Mike	35

Team Position	Team	Overall time
1	Headington Road Runners A	10:12:21
2	Swindon Harriers A	10:20:12
3	Reading Athletic Club	10:34:13
4	Reading Road Runners A	10:34:18
5	Newbury Athletic Club	10:36:12
6	Bearbrook Joggers A	10:51:26
7	Abingdon Amblers A	11:21:23
8	Eynsham Road Runners	11:30:02
9	Handy Cross B	11:41:30
10	Pewsey Vale RC	11:42:35
11	Headington Road Runners B	11:50:14
12	Compton Harriers	11:53:55
13	Reading Road Runners B	12:06:29
14	Headington Road Runners Ladies	12:12:56
15	Bearbrook Joggers B	12:13:08
16	Handy Cross A	12:13:22
17	Thame Runners A	12:20:20
18	Swindon Striders Wantabees	12:22:59
19	Marlborough RC A	12:29:48
20	Headington Road Runners Vets	12:41:56
21	Swindon Harriers B	12:50:47
22	Handy Cross C	13:01:11
23	Innoggy Power	13:09:01
24	Minehead Running Club	13:12:19
25	Thornbury RC	13:16:42
26	Swindon Striders Hasbeens	13:21:34
27	Thame Runners B	13:29:00
28	Marlborough RC C	13:31:04
29	Oxford Brookes University	14:05:32
30	Inkpen Joggers	14:10:17
31	Innoggy Current	14:15:38
32	Abingdon Amblers B	14:43:59
33	Marlborough RC Ladies	14:53:58
34	Kennet Valley HHH	15:02:33
35	Reading Road Runners Vets	15:06:50