

Ridgeway Relay 2008

15 June 2008

To be honest, running the first leg always seems a good idea until the morning of the event and you realize what time you have to get up. However, when the alarm woke me at 4:15 I was instead quite relieved, given I'd just been dreaming it was 6:30 and was going to miss the start. Some 3 hours later we were standing on Ivinghoe Beacon thinking how wonderful it was to be out so early, and dead on 7:30 the klaxon made a pathetic squeak and we (chicken, GOM and the rest) were off. Within a couple of hundred yards it was clear that the legs weren't quite up to scratch this year, as a surprisingly large percentage of the runners seemed to be streaming out in front of me. However, we arrived safely at the end, only some 4 mins behind our previous times. Catherine was there to congratulate me on the lack of any obvious signs of exertion, and then questioned, given there were some runners only about 30 seconds ahead of me, why I hadn't run a bit faster and beaten them.

Jackie had been camping locally overnight – only £6 for a field with a portaloo – and with full knowledge of the pain ahead shot off down the road towards Wendover. She re-appeared bang on time an hour later, having been encouraged along the way by a Doberman that seemed to have a distinct interest in Chickens.

Clive took over, for a leg he had run previously many years ago when it was some 2 miles shorter. Despite the assumption these extra miles were likely to be boring he maintained interest and ran it as quick as any of us in the past. Pauline had been waiting around for Clive to appear, chatting idly to all the supporters, when a figure appeared on the horizon. There's Clive, you can tell from the way he runs she said as she rushed to the start, ready to take over. Instead we had to wait another 15 minutes for the real Clive to arrive at his appointed time; chickens were exchanged, then we all jumped into our cars and sped off leaving Pauline as a lone figure disappearing into the distance. As we left, a well late Keith arrived to unofficially run this his favourite leg.

Brian was waiting at the temporary car park near Swyncombe church when we arrived, having been ferried there by Dee (his occasional supporter / chauffeuse) and after the earlier than expected arrival of Pauline set off westwards. We knew his arrival at South Stoke was imminent when another runner arriving was heard to comment that he had passed someone with chicken legs. Whether that was a reference to Bernadette or to Brian himself was never fully explained.

Ray meanwhile had been not warming up, but had instead been consuming vast quantities of anabolic steroids, drinking copious amounts of water and complaining of the lack of a pub at his finish. With Brian's arrival we saw Ray off and then felt able to dive into the pub to make up for none at Ray's finish. Eventually we went to meet him at the finish, and his arrival some 5 minutes ahead of schedule was proof that Ray is definitely not the slow, bald-headed, fat git as previously thought.

Kevin meanwhile had arrived at his mass start only to be shocked at the competition he was up against – real runners, not the group of decrepit hash reprobates he had expected. But he bravely competed, and with the assistance of Anne who made a number of sorties up onto the Ridgeway to cajole him along, he did in fact finish with a most respectable placing.

Mike was next up, having been volunteered late in the day. Rew had picked him up from home for a few hours respite from the trials and tribulations he must be suffering at home, having inadvertently de-heeled Annie some 2 weeks previously when manfully saving her from a raging torrent of bullocks. Reports suggest he was struggling at the half way point, but his run was in the end significantly faster than previously achieved.

Rew had been supporting along the route, but now it was his turn. He has spent the year training hard, as a result of Keith being very pleased to see him last year, even though there was more of him. A half marathon and a 10K in the last few weeks had him in fighting fit form and as Mike appeared the marshall told Rew it could not possibly be KVH3 since there was no chicken to be seen. However, with a hand thrust into his shorts Bernadette was produced and handed over for the next 10 miles. After refreshments at Ogbourne St George Rew was able to knock some 5 minutes off his personal best.

For Becky, this was her valedictory run, since for the next 2 years she's going to be working in Ho Chi Minh city (Saigon to most of us). Despite running the London marathon she was adamant that there was no way she would finish at 7pm, but the squawk of a chicken heralded her arrival over the brow of the hill, allowing her a final sprint to the finish just a few seconds after the hour.

This was a superb performance; the first time the chickens have made it end-to-end, no one got lost or picked up a wooden spoon for coming last and we finished some 15 minutes ahead of schedule. Most of us re-located to the Wellington Arms for a small beverage or two – the rest being unable to drag their weary bodies all the way to Marlborough. No one has refused, as yet, to participate again next year – even Becky is willing to fly back from Vietnam if we buy her a return ticket, so perhaps, next year, we might just do it again.

For those interested in the results please see below / over. The statistics are courtesy of Marlborough Running Club, with any errors added by GOM.

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Leg	Runner	Approx Distance	Time	Min/mile	Individual Position	Team Position
1	Jeremy Rees	11.0	1:24:34	7:41	26	26
2	Jackie Cryer	6.0	1:05:18	10:53	34	32
3	Clive Harper	9.4	1:22:37	8:47	28	31
4	Pauline Harper	5.4	57:24	10:38	34	32
5	Brian Lovell	10.1	1:49:06	10:48	36	33
6	Ray Cryer	10.4	1:30:41	8:43	32	34
7	Kevin Worrall	9.1	1:23:38	9:11	30	34
8	Mike Fisher	7.8	1:26:12	11:03	37	34
9	Rew Mueller	10.7	1:28:50	8:18	25	34
10	Becky Mitchell	9.4	1:16:36	8:09	29	33
Totals		89.3	13:44:56			

	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Leg 1	1:35:45	2:03:27	2:26:04	1:21:50	1:21:06	1:35:34	1:24:34
Leg 2	59:52	1:04:25	1:08:15	1:16:08	1:22:06	1:05:48	1:05:18
Leg 3		1:22:24	1:38:35	1:50:44	1:23:22	1:28:24	1:22:37
Leg 4		1:29:31	1:01:15	1:08:58	1:05:04	1:06:15	57:24
Leg 5	1:49:13	1:36:06	1:07:19	2:00:30	1:51:43	1:32:32	1:49:06
Leg 6	1:43:21	1:39:21	1:44:11	1:46:51	1:55:07	1:18:48	1:30:41
Leg 7	1:47:14	1:17:32	1:12:37	1:48:30	1:12:16	1:08:26	1:23:38
Leg 8	1:20:29	1:25:49	1:14:53	1:32:14	1:35:39	1:19:31	1:26:12
Leg 9	1:28:20	1:32:32	1:20:50	1:39:00	1:33:01	1:36:27	1:28:50
Leg 10	1:38:54	1:31:26	1:31:22	1:54:19	1:18:21	1:15:09	1:16:36
Total	14:42:48	15:02:33	14:25:21	16:19:04	14:37:45	13:26:54	13:44:56
Place	30 / 35	34 / 35	37 / 39	36 / 39	32 / 34	37 / 41	33 / 38

Position	Team	Class	Overall Time
1	VOAAC 1	Mixed	9:30:58
2	Abingdon Amblers A	Mixed	10:12:13
3	Headington A	Mixed	10:12:29
4	Handy Cross Team 1	Mixed	10:32:58
5	Thame Runners A	Mixed	10:34:27
6	Reading Roadrunners A	Mixed	10:39:50
7	Swindon Harriers A	Mixed	10:49:33
8	Compton Harriers	Mixed	10:50:21
9	Newbury AC Mint Imperials	Mixed	10:51:54
10	Banbury Harriers	Mixed	10:57:56
11	Marlborough A	Mixed	10:59:32
12	Eynsham Roadrunners 1	Mixed	11:04:09
13	White Horse Harriers AC	Mixed	11:29:28
14	Bearbrook A	Mixed	11:29:42
15	Pewsey Chasers	Mixed	11:44:16
16	Bearbrook Babes	Ladies	11:48:10
17	Swindon Striders	Mixed	11:49:01
18	Wootton Bassett Hounds	Mixed	11:54:51
19	Headington B	Mixed	12:05:40
20	Bearbrook B	Vets	12:19:12
21	New High Street Hurdlers	Mixed	12:20:25
22	HWH3	Mixed	12:32:30
23	Newbury AC Turnpike 10	Mixed	12:35:00
24	Marlborough B	Mixed	12:38:36
25	Abingdon Amblers B	Vets	12:41:53
26	Eynsham Roadrunners B	Mixed	12:42:04
27	Handy Cross Team 2	Mixed	12:52:37
28	Inpen Joggers 1	Mixed	12:53:46
29	Abingdon Amblers C	Mixed	13:09:14
30	Thame Runners	Mixed	13:13:02
31	Cotswold Outdoor RWE	Mixed	13:15:58
32	Swindon Harriers B	Mixed	13:41:42
33	Kennet Valley HHH	Vets ??	13:44:56
34	RWE	Mixed	14:05:46
35	UK Netrunner	Mixed	14:11:32
36	Oxford Brooks University	Mixed	14:44:55
37	Reading Roadrunners Vets	Vets	14:55:44
38	Inkpen Joggers2	Mixed	15:14:17