



THE NEW STRIDER



Volume 12 Issue 3

Newsletter for Desford Striders Running Club

March 2011

Leicestershire Road Running League.

10K proves a hit!

Despite a few last minute hitches, including doubt over the race venue, the Striders managed to successfully stage our annual 10K on Sunday 27th Feb. This was no mean feat as, following on from the Bagworth Heath cross-country, this was the second race in 8 days that the club had hosted. And it is thanks to every single Strider, family member and friend who either ran, marshalled, served refreshments or helped in any other way, that allowed us to achieve this. Thank you!

The day of the race started early with four of us turning up at the Caterpillar Sports Club at 8.00 a.m. to get the club house and course ready. At this time it was a lovely day and looked absolutely ideal for running. But this is Britain...in February, and by the time the race start came around, the weather had turned to a cold, miserable drizzle, which kept going all the way through the race and still persisted during the post race clear up!

But it didn't deter the effort put in by the 474 finishers, which included a total of 23 Striders, happily making up the three full teams. In fact we had enough ladies to have two complete teams running. An excellent effort.

Desford 10K

Men	Pos	Pts
R. Billington	36	36:36
G. Hobbs	129	40:54
A. Cave	142	41:38
P. Goddard	147	41:55
G. Speed	150	42:04
A. Cole	165	42:50
P. Marvin	183	43:49
G. Grimsley	218	45:50
S. Tebbutt	221	45:54
C. Coulson	261	48:49
M. Goodrich	268	49:40
H. Long	275	50:25
S. Bailey	281	51:09
N. Trotman	292	52:52
L. Garner	295	53:20
Ladies		
L. Cave	25	45:07
L. Charlton	51	48:04
E. Crowe	63	49:46
J. Densley	76	50:57
N. Glover	77	50:57
P. Lord	89	52:02
R. Evans	112	55:02
M. Hobbs	146	1:02:59

There were some fine individual performances as usual, including one from Gavin Speed who knocked over three minutes off his personal best! A splendid effort on what is quite a testing course. It was also a delight to see the return to competitive running of club favourite Clive Coulson, who ran only his second race in five years. Hopefully this is a start of his long awaited comeback!

The ladies were led home by Liz Cave and Lisa Charlton, and as I said we had two full teams out. In the past only the first four ladies counted towards a team, but now the next four finishers score for a 'B' team. For those of you who are interested in such things the league tables following our 10K are reproduced on page 2.

Before leaving our race a special mention to Andrew Hurd. He turned up not feeling too great and offered to act as sweeper by running the course with the last runner. This turned out to be a lady from Barrow RC called Kerry Jones. She was so grateful for his help and encouragement throughout the whole 10K, that she gave him a big hug at the end and said how much she appreciated the help. That's what it's all about, supporting every runner regardless of ability, speed or talent. Well done Andrew!

As usual I've not been able to mention everybody who ran and I'm not always aware of P.Bs etc. If you think somebody else should get a mention then don't keep it under your hat, let me know and I'll be more than pleased to bung it in.

Kibworth 6M

Date: 20th March 2011
Venue: Kibworth High School
Smeeton Rd, Kibworth
Time: 1030 hrs
Dist: 6M
Cost: £2.50

Parking: **Please car share.** Over the years the league has increased in terms of the number of clubs, making parking more difficult.



Photo courtesy of Huncote RC

Lee Garner leads a pack of runners out of the Caterpillar car park at the start of the Striders' own 10K.

2011 LRRL fixtures

Winter

20 Mar Kibworth 6
(Entry fee £2.50, payable on the day?)

Summer

22 May Desford 1/4 Mar
12 Jun Swithland 10K
6 Jul Hungarton 7
3 Aug Huncote 5
4 Sep John Fraser 10
(For individual entry fees, check race details.)



Got anything for the newsletter?

Please forward to: Graham Hobbs at

dsrc.inform@googlemail.com

Or

**146 Kirkby Road, Barwell,
Leicestershire.**

Leicester Running Shop LRRL Tables

The Desford 10K provided the Senior Men's team with their second place in Division 3 and has moved them up to equal second with West End. However they remain a full 10 points behind Division leaders Beaumont.

The men's vets are lying fourth in their third division table and have a gap of 14 points to make up on Leicester Tri if they want to get to the next level.

The ladies team are current second from bottom of Division 1, but are putting up a battle to keep their top flight position going. They are just two points behind Huncote and with Kibworth and all the Summer races to come, they have the opportunity to make ground.

After narrowly missing a full 'B' team in the previous three races we had enough ladies out at Desford to achieve this, giving them their best result of the season. They are currently situated in the top half of the division.

The ladies vets' team is ticking along nicely in division 2 and are lying fourth, although they have a rather large 12 point gap to close on Wigston Phoenix if they want to get into one of the promotion spots.

<u>LRRL 2010 Ladies Div 3</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Beaumont	94
Nuneaton	82
Harborough	80
Hermitage B	71
Hinckley B	65
Ivanhoe B	65
Wreake B	55
West End B	51
Wigston Ph B	51
Desford B	49
Fleckney B	49
L. Tri B	47
Charnwood Tri	43
Harborough B	37
S. Derbys	35
Beaumont B	29
Roadhogs B	28
Shepshed	26
L. Coritians	19
Whetstone	18
Nuneaton B	6

<u>LRRL 2010 Ladies Div 1</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Charnwood AC	77
Leicester Tri	64
Barrow	63
Birstall	57
Fleckney	53
Barrow B	49
Stilton	42
Huncote	39
Desford	37
Roadhogs	35

<u>LRRL 2010 Ladies Vet Div 2</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Harborough	69
Wigston Ph	69
Fleckney	63
Desford	57
Roadhogs	52
West End	52
Stilton	46
OWLS	0

<u>LRRL 2010 Men Vet Div 3</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Shepshed	69
Leicester Tri	68
Beaumont	67
Desford	56
Sth Derbys	51
Nuneaton	49
Birstall	48
Whetstone	40
Charnwood Tri	36
OWLS	8
L University	0

<u>LRRL 2010 Men Div 3</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Beaumont	73
Desford	63
West End	63
Sth Derbys	57
Birstall	56
Nuneaton	47
Shepshed	45
Charnwood Tri	40
Whetstone	39
Harborough	33
L University	21

Block Entries for the Summer LRRL races

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, Gray Grimsley will be looking after the block bookings for the Summer LRRL races.

He'll take your entry fee, fill your details on an entry form and send it all off to the host club, thereby saving you the effort. He's usually up at SiD on Thursday evenings, so if you get yourself organised there shouldn't be any problem getting hold of him.

If you're not giving Gary cash you will need to send/give him a cheque for your entry fee. Please make these payable to the whomever the host club states (a quick search on the internet should find this) and not to either Gary or Desford Striders. If you do he will have to start chasing Richard McBean for a club cheque. Also, please give him your date of birth, as he will need this for the entry form. The first race this will apply to is our own 1/4 marathon on 22nd May.

If not seeing Gary up at SiD, please send your cheque to him at 25 Berry Hill Cottage, Dawson's Lane, Barwell, LE9 8BE. You can also get hold of him on **07743 238914 (check)**.

I didn't have the results for the Markfield 10K at the time that Feb's newsletter went out. ..well here they are now for your delight!

Markfield 10K

<u>Men</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Time</u>
R. Billington	37	37:07
G. Hobbs	126	41:59
P. Goddard	150	43:00
D. Percy	157	43:14
B. Moran	189	45:14
S. Tebbutt	227	47:23
M. Foley	249	48:42
G. Grimsley	262	49:43
D. Playford	271	50:38
M. Goodrich	276	50:52
H. Long	278	51:34
F. Breen	284	52:20
S. Bailey	291	53:41
N. Trotman	298	55:46
L. Garner	301	56:21
N. Ackland	129	42:13
L. Barber	142	42:47
A. Cave	143	42:48
G. Speed	198	45:37
P. Marvin	204	45:56
<u>Ladies</u>		
N. Glover	82	52:55
M. Playford	83	52:55
R. Evans	123	57:25
M. Hobbs	144	62:56
L. Cave	28	46:42
E. Crowe	56	49:54

LRRL Individual Club Standings

After the first four races of the LRRL season the Individual Standings are starting to take shape and the men's vet. League, in particular, has a familiar look to it, with Richard Billington clearly at the top of the table.

The ladies vet. table is looking very healthy with 9 individuals having run so far this year. Nicola Glover is our early leader, closely followed by last year's champion, Pam Lord.

Ady Cave leads Lee Barber by a couple of points in the senior men's table, whilst Emily Crowe and Liz Cave are tied at the top of the ladies equivalent on 9 pts.

<u>Male Seniors</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Adrian Cave	16
Lee Barber	14
Gavin Speed	9
Neil Ackland	5
Pete Marvin	4

<u>Female Vets.</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Nicola Glover	14
Pam Lord	10
Lisa Charlton	9
Marie Hobbs	8
Ruth Evans	5
Jane Davies	5
Marie Playford	4
Anna Cave	2
Caroline Humber	1

<u>Female Seniors</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Emily Crowe	9
Liz Cave	9
Jo Densley	4

<u>Male Vets.</u>	
	<u>Pts</u>
Richard Billington	60
Graham Hobbs	53
Paul Goddard	51
Sean Tebbutt	41
Duncan Percy	40
Gary Grimsley	37
Mark Foley	27
Mark Goodrich	26
Henry Long	24
Steve Bailey	21
Dave Playford	15
Andrew Cole	12
Dave McCartney	11
Brian Moran	11
Nigel Trotman	10
Clive Coulson	9
Lee Garner	7
Steve Hibben	4
Steph Pandit	4
John Shade	4
Francis Breen	4

In the Bag at last!

Derby Runner Cross-country League

After 14 months and three previous attempts, the Striders finally managed to successfully stage our Bagworth Heath cross-country event last month. Following two cancellations this season due to heavy snow, we finally had the opportunity to put our race on when the league asked if we could step in to replace Shelton's race. They had unfortunately run into difficulties and had to cancel the event out at Allestree Park, Derbys.

This request gave us a little over two weeks to get everything in to place, but thanks to a dedicated band of Striders and their family members, we successfully ran the fourth race in the league's calendar. In particular the main organisers Paddy Crowe and Steve Morris deserve a large thank you as they had a lot of work to get through in such a short time.

The race itself was very well received by the other participating clubs and various favourable comments we received suggest that it is one of the runner's favourites. One gent from Roadhogs described it as "a proper cross-country course". So with that sort of comment being made, it shows we are making a worthwhile contribution to the local running calendar. Well done folks!

Right onto the race itself.....at the best of times Bagworth Heath would probably be described as damp. On Sunday even the hill slopes were sodden, particularly the one coming through the wooded area towards the finishing area. It was ankle deep mud all the way, with no chance of finding a dry, solid piece of ground anywhere. In fact on the first time around it caught two runners out in front of me as they tumbling.....no I didn't trip them! Thankfully there was no rain on the day itself; otherwise we could have been swimming most of it. Although I'm sure our tri-athlete members would have coped with that admirably!

We had a relatively small group run the race, with just three women amongst a total of 16 Striders. They were all led home by Alistair Richards who picked up a very fine 16th place. Andrew Cole made his first appearance of the season and at the same time renewed his friendly rivalry with Graham Hobbs. They were neck and neck all the way around, with neither giving an inch until Graham managed to pull away, just a little, on the last lap, ensuring he was first vet home. They were both closely followed by Ady Cave, who put in a tremendous effort, but was literally a few inches short of Andrew.

Emma Marvin was, as usual, our first lady to finish, taking an excellent 3rd place. Liz Cave was next home in 17th position, whilst Marie Hobbs came 75th.

Other Strider results are here for you to have a look at, but just a few words about Nigel Trotman, who having been out of racing for a little while stated that his aim was just to finish. Well he did just that and was well chuffed with his effort.

Bagworth Heath		
Men	Pos	Time
A. Richards	16	35:00
G. Hobbs	63	39:12
A. Cole	69	39:51
A. Cave	70	39:54
G. Speed	75	40:06
P. Marvin	95	42:14
S. Tebbutt	108	43:35
G. Grimsley	138	46:29
D. Playford	155	48:05
S. Bailey	159	48:46
H. Long	160	48:58
J. Shade	165	50:33
N. Trotman	168	51:13
Ladies		
E. Marvin	3	36:56
L. Cave	17	44:34
M. Hobbs	65	57:12

Bosworth		
Men	Pos	Time
G. Speed	59	42:29
S. Tebbutt	113	48:45
G. Hobbs	120	49:14
P. Marvin	121	49:19
G. Grimsley	122	49:19
D. Playford	135	51:28
S. Bailey	138	52:00
J. Shade	142	53:30
F. Breen	148	56:57
Ladies		
E. Marvin	3	39:45
M. Hobbs	75	1:05:45

The final round of the Derby Runner League was hosted by Hinckley RC and they used a course I have not seen before. Parking on the Country Park car park, we made our way across the road to the fields behind Bosworth Hotel. And what a fine course it turned out to be, around 5 1/4 miles of undulating farm land, with the obligatory run along a cooling calf deep stream and unusually this was just one lap. Made a nice change.

Unfortunately only a small group of just eleven Striders experienced the run, and for the third time in five races the club failed to get a ladies team out. A bit of a shame as we only need four! The club was led home by one of these, Emma Marvin picking up another excellent finish, this time coming in as third lady. Gavin Speed was our first man in, followed by Sean Tebbutt and then Graham Hobbs.

Hinckley RC certainly put some effort into their cross-country courses, as to my knowledge, this is the fifth course that they have used for league races. Provides excellent variety.

The club's failure to inspire our ladies to run the cross-country events looks as though it will result in both the ladies and mixed teams being relegated from their Divisions, leaving just the men in Division 1.

100% There were five League races throughout the season and we had a total of 36 Striders complete at least one race. However we had five who finished each event. For the men they were Gavin Speed, Pete Marvin, Graham Hobbs, Gary Grimsley, John Shade, with the only lady doing so was, Emma Marvin. Well done to them all.

Derby Runner League Tables	Team - Div 1	Men - Div 1	Ladies - Div 1		
	Pts	Pts	Pts		
Hatton	49	Hatton	48	Hatton	46
Wreake	43	Wreake	44	Shepshed	44
Hinckley	35	Hinckley	40	Barrow	41
Shepshed	33	Shepshed	35	Ivanhoe	31
Ivanhoe	28	Desford	24	Wreake	29
Derby Tri	21	Barrow	17	Huncote	26
Shelton	16	S. Derbys	15	Westend	22
Westend	16	Westend	11	Hinckley	15
Barrow	15	Hermitage	8	Desford	11
Desford	11	Harborough	0	Shelton	6

Cross-country Individual His and Hers Titles for The Hobbses Club Standings



As well as being a good day for the club, our own Bagworth Heath race turned out to be a memorable occasion for Graham and Marie Hobbs as they clinched the men's and ladies veterans titles.

Going into the race Graham just needed to be third Strider vet. home to clinch the title he last won in 2003. However he wasn't leaving anything to chance and put all his effort in to be the first over the line and ensure nobody will stop him picking up only his second club title.

Gary Grimsley and Sean Tebbutt had a close battle for second place with Gary just winning out by two points. Both men are to be congratulated as this is the first time either of them have got themselves a top three finish.

Marie Hobbs, ladies vet champion, also for the second time..



Graham shows his delight at becoming the men's vet champion for only the second time.

Meanwhile Marie, who was the only lady vet. to run at Bagworth, picked up maximum points to retain the crown she last won in 2007 and along with her lesser half takes her second title club title, on this occasion by some considerable margin.

In second place was a lady in her first season with the club, Amanda Richards. Although she and Jane Davies both had 5 points, Amanda takes second place by virtue of having run two races to Jane's one.

As announced in a previous newsletter Emma Marvin won the ladies senior title some time ago. Liz Cave was second lady whilst her namesake, but no relation, Anna Cave and also in her first season with the Striders, was third.

As Gavin registers his first club win

Gavin Speed has picked up his first club title, but had to wait until the final race of the season to clinch it. With Pete Marvin breathing down his neck he couldn't afford to miss the race out at Bosworth. He duly completed it and finished 5 point ahead of Pete, who takes his first top three placing. Alistair Richards took third position.

Male Vets.

	Pts
G. Hobbs	68
G. Grimsley	47
S. Tebbutt	45
J. Shade	33
D. Playford	30
F. Breen	23
A. Brine	23
D. Percy	23
B. Moran	21
S. Bailey	20
R. Billington	14
D. Lawrie	13
A. Cole	13
H. Long	12
A. Hurd	12
P. Goddard	12
D. McCartney	9
R. McBean	7
P. Lord	6
N. Trotman	6
P. Goodchild	3

Female Vets.

	Pts
M. Hobbs	18
A. Richards	5
J. Davies	5
N. Glover	4
E. Lawrie	4
J. Morris	1

Female Seniors

	Pts
E. Marvin	20
L. Cave	6
A. Cade	2
C. Humber	1

Male Seniors

	Pts
G. Speed	19
P. Marvin	14
A. Richards	10
A. Cave	9
L. Barber	9

MONDAY NIGHT OFF ROAD RUNNING

With the lighter evenings on the way back, Marie and David Playford have once again sorted out a schedule for Monday Night Off-road Running. The schedule they have devised now has runs from five different locations and distances range from 5 to 9 miles. So a little something for everyone.

These runs will start every Monday at 6.30pm. Please come along there will be plenty of re-grouping stops so no one will get left behind!

Any questions or queries please just give Marie and David a ring on either 0116 275 1070 or 07528 622 699.

Hope to see you at the first run at the Burroughs on 28th March.

Burroughs Ratby 5 to 7M	Bradgate Pk 6 to 8M	Thornton Res 5 to 7M	Huncote Leis Centre 6M	SID 9M
28 th March	4 th April	11 th April	18 th April	
25 th April	2 nd May	9 th May		16 th May
23 rd May	30 th May	6 th June	13 th June	
20 th June	27 th June	4 th July		11 th July
18 th July	25 th July	1 st Aug	8 th Aug	
15 th Aug	22 nd Aug	29 th Aug		5 th Sept
12 th Sept	19 th Sept	26 th Sept		

Junior Striders

As with the adults our Junior Striders have completed their round of races, with the final two being at Bagworth Heath and Bosworth. And whilst we just had two run the final event, we had an excellent turnout at our own race, with six lads representing the club out of an overall attendance of just 26 taking part in both races.

The conditions at Bagworth were heavy going with copious amounts of mud and heavy, soggy ground to contend with, despite this they all acquitted themselves admirably. As with the previous two races we just had Mathew Ratnett and Edward Percy in the year 1-6 race and they both ran well finishing 4th and 9th respectively.

Dan Ratnett led our four lads home in the Year 7-12 race by coming an impressive second, whilst Kieran Billington wa7th and Matty Billington, running his first race for a couple of years and his first in this age group, came 9th.

Bagworth Heath		
Year 1-6	Pos	Time
Mathew Ratnett	4	06:10
Edward Percy	9	06:32
Year 7-12		
Dan Ratnett	2	11:15
Kieran Billington	5	11:52
Alex Percy	7	13:09
Matty Billington	9	13:50

Bosworth		
Year 1-6	Pos	Time
Edward Percy	8	8:02
Year 7-12		
Alex Percy	6	15:41

Onto the final event at Bosworth.....as mentioned above, we were down to just the two runners, those being the Percy brothers. Edward, the only Junior Strider to run in all 5 races, came 8th in 8:02, whilst Alex finished 6th in 15:41 in the Year 7-12 event.



The Boys in Blue! (L to R): Mathew Ratnett; Kieran Billington; Dan Ratnett; Alex Percy; Matty Billington and Edward Percy, all nice and clean before the Bagworth race!

Awards! Within the two year group races there are prizes awarded to particular years and I am pleased to tell you that in the Year 3-4 Category Mathew was first boy overall, whilst Edward Percy was second. Congratulations to both of them, well deserved after turning up to so many races!

Some 'thank you's'; Firstly to the mum and dads who have brought the Juniors to a race this year (specially The Percys who have been at every race) and also to Karen Percy for the excellent picture you see on this page. I have received a file containing the results from all the Jnr races and the category places. Want a copy? Let me know & I'll e-mail it to you. Usual e-mail address!

Livingston Relays Sunday 24th April 2010 - 10.30 a.m.

As mentioned a month or so ago Once again we will be looking to try and get a few teams out for this popular event. Last year we had a marvellous six teams out. Four men and two ladies. It would be great to beat that this year. Unfortunately the event is being held on Easter Sunday so that may reduce those able to run. Hopefully it won't have too much of an affect.

I am willing to assist with collating the teams, but if you too can lend a hand too, that would be great please get in touch either via a committee member or dsrc.inform@googlemail.com.

As the Olympics are taking place in 2012, Loughborough University is out of bounds. Why I don't know, instead the venue is Braunstone Park. Hopefully a shorter journey for most of us!

Each leg will be three miles and we need four men per team and three ladies. This invitation extends ALL Striders. Don't think that because it's a relay you're not quick enough. If you can run, you'll do just fine! So if you've not tried them out before, why not give it a go? The entry fee per runner is just £3. Hopefully see you there.

RUTLAND WATER RUN Sunday 27th March

Just a quick reminder that the Playford have arranged a run from Rutland Water on Sunday 27th March. They will be meeting at Normanton car park at 9.15am for a run of either 22miles (good marathon training) or 15miles, with lunch afterwards at the local pub if you fancy it! If you need any further information please give me a ring on 07528 622699.

Thursday Night Club Running Winter Runs

All distances are approximate and could be out

Date	Name	Dist	Name	Dist
24-03	Botcheston hill & pub	6.0	Botcheston	4.0
31-03	Back to summer running			



A slightly smaller turnout for this year's AGM, so our thanks for those who attended.

It was rather a straight forward meeting this year, with very little discussion from the floor. Certainly less than last year's excellent input.

Our distinguished Chairman, Paddy Crowe, explained that the Committee was losing four members due to various commitments and in one case the need to re-charge some batteries.

So it was with thanks that Ady Cave, Andy Holmes, Julie Messenger and Graham Hobbs all stepped down. Unfortunately just one person has come forward to offer their services and that individual was Steve Bailey. Steve has had one stint on the Committee since joining the club in 2004 and already looks after the purchasing of the club's kit, so his offer is very much appreciated.

Along with Steve, this leaves Paddy Crowe (Chairman), Gary Grimsley, Valda Holmes, Andy Hurd, Pam Lord (Membership Secretary), Richard McBean (Treasurer) and Steve Morris.

Tuesday Night Running

Can't make either Monday or Thursday Night? Well how about Tuesday evening? The club can offer two sessions on this night.

Quality Session which goes from SiD at around 6.45 p.m. Depending on the schedule this can be hill sessions or interval work and runners go at the pace they want to. There is no question of pushing anybody too hard. You work as hard as you like and if you put a little effort in, you'll reap the benefits in the future.

The Co-op Run two groups are run from the Co-op in Desford at 6.30 p.m. I believe one is of a slow/steady pace, with the other being slightly quicker. Sean Tebbutt is the man to speak to for further details.

Why not give either one a go or alternate between the two?

A new date and time for

RAYM

In a bid to give this popular event a bit of a boost, the club has decided not only to try a new month, but also a new day and time. This year we are going for a Summer event on a Wednesday evening. Hopefully the prospect of a an evening run/walk will encourage more ladies to take part and raise money for Prostate Cancer.

Andy Hurd has offered to lead the organising group and he has already recruited Emily Crowe, Nicola Glover and Graham Hobbs. If you can offer a little help too, you would be more than welcome.

50 in 50

My challenge has come of age as it's now reached 21! And I celebrated this minor landmark by running my first half marathon in over two years. But more of that in a moment.

The other three races I've run this month have already been mentioned in this edition, those being Bagworth Heath, which was a bit of a personal triumph, as I clinched the Vets. cross-country title, which I managed in 2003. So to do it again is extremely pleasing for me. Next came the Desford 10K, nothing particularly special only that I had a good run which is unusual on our own course. Then came the last cross-country race of the season at Bosworth. This too was a bit of a triumph, but for a completely different reason.

The previous day I had had an excellent day walking the Belvoir Challenge with my family. Should you be wondering why I haven't included this in my '50 in 50', it's because I didn't run, and my challenge was to run the events. Anyway, it was extremely muddy, wet and very hard work, so I went to bed at around 10.45 p.m. feeling somewhat tired. I awoke at half past midnight with my stomach churning over and over, then spent the rest of the night dashing between the bedroom and bathroom, vomiting and suffering badly at the other end! Not unlike the week I had leading into this challenge back in October!

Anyway I eventually managed to eek out three hours sleep and woke up with the decision of whether to run the last cross-country race or not. Common sense said "No!" My head said "No!". My body said, "You really want to risk it???" Not really.....but I did. On my arrival Gwyneth quite rightly suggested I was being a bit silly, well that's not the word she used, but I can't disagree with her. Anyway, there were no signs of anything leaving my body without permission, so I took my place on the start line, but right at the back and with nobody behind me!

I started off with Marie, nice and leisurely (and with some toilet paper in a small plastic bag...just in case.....) After about half a mile things seemed to be holding together, so I picked the speed up, a little, and was very pleased to get around without any mishaps, as were the other 238 runners! So a 100% xc record and number 20 out of the way....good, I went home and straight to bed, where I ended up spending most of the afternoon. Incredibly when I got up the following day there was no sign of the dodgy internal workings, it was literally a '24 hour' bug.

Desford 10K

Bosworth

Bagworth Heath

Milton Keynes half-marathon

Not having run a half-marathon for over two years and having suffered a quite badly in last year's London Marathon, I approached this event with a little nervousness tension.

Taking the M1 I reached the centre of MK an hour and a half ahead of the start time. I was aware that it's a relatively modern city, built on a grid system, but as far as I could work out it's not much more than a large convention of roundabouts and car parks! Naturally my view is limited to the small area around the Xscape Centre, from which the event was being staged, so I apologise if this is a somewhat myopic view of the city.

I wandered over to use the toilets, of which there seemed to be plenty, warmed up, fuelled up and then drifted towards the start to watch the start of 5 and 10Ks, also being held under the banner of Milton Keynes Festival of Running. Very grand!

It turned out that Richard Billington was also running as I received a telephone call whilst sitting in the car reading. I looked for him at the start I didn't see him again until the finish.

The course is one of the flattest I've run on, with the first mile or so being slightly downhill. This led to a fast start, a very fast start! I had hoped for somewhere between 1.30 and 1.34 and knew that 6:52 miling would achieve a sub 1:30.

Glances at my GPS showed that for the first 4 or 5 miles I was well ahead of this and I knew I would suffer towards the finish, so I decided to try and 'bank' as much time as I could, but without overdoing it. A tricky tactic, but by that stage I thought it worth a go. At my age I may not get another chance to crack 1:30.

I latched myself to smaller groups, which pulled me along and I felt comfortable and strong. That was up until around 8 miles when I started to feel the pace a tad. Thankfully it didn't slow me too much and at 10 miles I had kept up an overall pace of 6:39 a mile. A quick cal-

ulation meant I had over two minutes to play with in the last three miles.....great!

Miles 11 and 12 slowed a bit and my overall pace dropped, but the MK crowds kept me going and responded to my requests for verbal help.

But mile 12! If I had started with wheels, then they were definitely dropping off one by one. My legs felt heavier and heavier. My mind started to wander and I could feel my will power drifting, but the comments an support fom spectators and marshals lifted me tremendously. And with still being 4 seconds a mile inside my target, no problem! Except! I hadn't checked the actual mileage on my GPS compared to the mile markers.

I got within a 100 yards of the finish and I thought I was comfortably inside my target. Then I saw Richard. He bawled at me that I had just 40 seconds. I looked at my watch, 1:29:10!! Oh no!! I could lose this! I started to sprint for the finish, to which my right calf started to cramp up.

I kept pushing as the line got closer and thankfully crossed the line in 1:29:50. I had lost a huge amount in the last three miles, but my 'time banking' had just worked. Oh joy! I then just sat on the ground just 10 yards past the finish and couldn't move for three or four minutes.

My GPS said the distance was 13.22, and my overall pace was 6:48! Note to self.....keep an eye on the distance too! Thinking I was well ahead, I nearly blew it and if Richard hadn't shouted at me, I may not have checked my GPS and missed out by seconds. So thanks Richard.

As I said the course was very flat, but there were numerous underpasses to negotiate and towards the end these felt steeper and steeper. The organisation was very good, well marshalled by friendly and encouraging folks. Definitely worth a look if you're after a fast time. As such if I get more distance and stamina training in, I'll look to go back next year.

Richard had an excellent run and clocked a super time of 1:255 and in 43rd position. There was a total of 2516 finishers and I was 177th, not a bad days work.

Onward to the Kibworth 6 and no. 22!

I must say thank you to those of you who are not only asking me about my 50 in 50, but also for your encouragement, but also for letting me know about races. If you are aware of any which don't get much advertising, please keep telling me. Thanks.

I've put her what I have planned for March through to May. If anybody fancies any of them and want a companion of the journey, let me know.

March:

Sun 20th - Kibworth 6

April:

Sat 2nd - Braunstone Park Run
 Sun 10th - Bosworth Duathlon
 Sun 17th - Heroes 10K - (N'th'ton)
 Sun 21st - Massey Ferg 5
 Sun 24th - Livingstone Relays
 Sat 30th - Rugby 5 (poss)

May:

Sun 8th - Hinckley half
 Sat 14th - Kenilworth Killer 10K
 Sun 15th - Wymeswold Waddle 5M
 Sun 22nd - Desford 1/4