

**Overton
Harriers**



**&
Athletic Club**

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December 2010 Issue 400

Visit us on our Web Site at www.overtonharriers.org.uk

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You can view or print this and previous editions from our website

January	3 rd	Somerley 5k & 10k (Ringwood)
	8 th	County XC Champs at Eastleigh
	15 th	XC LEAGUE, PROSPECT PARK, READING <i>Consistency League</i>
	16 th	STUBBINGTON 10K <i>Consistency League</i>
	20 th	WINTER HANDICAP
	29 th	Southern XC Champs at Parliament Hill

Also remember the Park Run 5k's at the War Memorial Park, Basingstoke on Saturday mornings.

FRANNY'S BITS

I hope everyone had a pleasant Christmas and has recovered from any New Year celebrations. As you can see this is the 400th edition of the club newsletter and several people have contributed articles & photos to mark this mile stone.

Congratulations to Kerri on receiving her Hampshire county vest, not many people can have gained theirs after only 2 cross country outings in the Hampshire League and it is a super reward for all the hard training she has put in over the last year.

The Popham XC that was postponed on the 4th December and again on 18th December has now been cancelled so the Hants XC League will be based on only 4 races this year.

No. 400 *from John Hoare*

I would like to pass on my own congratulations to the current publishers of the newsletter; Richard and Piers, for the wonderful job they are doing. I know from experience what a time consuming and difficult task it is to produce the publication month on month. And how different it is now, using modern technology with gives it a truly professional finish; even with colour photos. What we would have given for this in the past.

Newsletter No.1 came out November 1976, a single foolscap sheet printed on both sides. For a long time it was produced on an old fashioned typewriter, typing onto skins (and don't make a typing error or you have to use correction fluid and try to type over the mistake) and then onto an old Gestetner duplicator

constantly needing to be re-inked. Does anyone have a clue what I am talking about?? Try the local museum.

I have been asked to produce a little of 'all our yesterdays' for edition 400 and felt it may be appropriate to delve into a previous article I did for the ORC in 1987.; many thanks to Anna who found it. *I have added a few comments but it does give a flavour of the early days.*

Overton Harriers AC – View in 1987

The first seeds to the Overton Harriers were sown in 1973 when a young Geordie schoolteacher, Keith Blakey, moved into the village. A member of Gosforth Harriers, Keith set about engendering some enthusiasm for the sport and quickly produced a group which set out on the first ever run around the now widely used Harroway 3.5 mile course. Five took part in the inaugural run which proved the forerunner of a highly successful club.

Eric Tilbury, Pip Tilbury, Bob Phillips, Mike Gregory and Keith himself – these were the first five. For ten months the group grew and one of the events that was started in this period was the Combe Gibbet to Overton 16 mile run, a run that is now firmly established in the athletics calendar, and 1987 sees its 14th running with athletes from all over the South taking part. (*What a proud record we have here. Just one year missed due to Foot and Mouth and we are now looking forward to its 37th running in 2011.*)

On 16th April 1974 the club was put on an Official footing with the first General Meeting held at the Recreation Centre. At this meeting John Hoare was elected Chairman, Keith Blakey – Secretary and Mick Scoggins, for many years Treasurer of the O.R.C. – the Treasurer. The rest of the Committee consisted of Mick Gregory, Eric Tilbury, Del Dyer, Tony Lewis, Tony Brown and Richard Berry. It is interesting to note that at the beginning of 1987 many of the original Committee are still heavily involved in the club.

The first few years saw the club establishing itself in the athletics world with teams taking part in the Wessex and Hampshire Cross Country League, also the Southern Athletics League. The Harriers were not just about competition but had a strong social side outside the competitive world of athletics.

Easter 1978 saw the first Lands End to Overton relay, this was repeated again two years later, a most outstanding feat by all who took part. The relay team raised over £1000 for Multiple Sclerosis. In 1984 the Harriers celebrated their tenth anniversary with over sixty members taking part in the famous Harroway "Run".

1986 saw another of the Harriers major successes when they organised an event in support of Sport Aid. It is much to the credit of the club and to the village of Overton that the grand sum of £3000 was raised. The early days saw a strong junior section that was consistently getting among the honours and included members that have gone on to make a considerable mark on the sport. These included Paul Wheeler, Andrew and Patrick Hoare, Mark Dennison, Brian Hunter and Paul England.

Other well established members are Paddy Keenan, Hefin Richards, Dave Vosser, Kevin Wartens and Mike Bliss. This strong squad has been making a great impact over the last few years with much success.

In 1985, following a superb run in the London Marathon, Paul Wheeler became the first member to gain International honours, but the club did not have to wait long for vest number two when Patrick Hoare came second in the Welsh Cross Country Championship.

(Now we have Cath, who has earned many International vests and on numerous occasions has captained the Welsh team, Ed Simpson and Moira West all with international honours).

More recently, Mike Bliss finished second in the County Championship and has been selected for the Inter-County Championship with the promising pair of Club Captain Andrew Hoare and Mark Dennison being named reserves, a fine achievement.

The Harriers cater for all ages, just look at the Marathon men John Thomas and Eric Tilbury. Fast, slow, young and old, just turn up at the Town Meadow on Monday at 7pm and Thursday at 7:30pm and sample the friendly atmosphere.

Overton Ladies Running Club

One of the newest clubs to affiliate to the O.R.C., Overton Ladies has recently completed their first year and membership has risen from a nucleus of just three to over twenty members.

Treasurer, Emma Scoggins, must count as the club's most dedicated member and is a familiar figure clocking up the miles around the Overton streets. In 1986 Emma became the first Overton Lady to compete in, and finish, the London Marathon and, with club mate Sue Perren, hopes to repeat the run again this year.

Other regular competitors running in the clubs pale blue and white colours are Jane Wheeler, Madeline Vosser, Audra Cozze, Sally Hutchings, Jenny Hoare, Mary Reid, Sheila Warters and Sue Moule.

The club is not only for those who wish to compete in cross-country events, such as the Wessex League, or road races. We have a wide range of ability and some members prefer to enjoy a gentle job around the local country lanes, especially on a summer evening.

You may not be aware that Overton Ladies Running Club was totally independent from Overton Harriers and it wasn't until the 1990 AGM that the two clubs merged to become the Overton Harriers & AC that it is now.

Another feature of the early days was the twinning that was established between ourselves and the German athletic club LC Euskirchen. Out of the exchange visits that we had with them the Overton 5 was born – in those days it was the Overton International 5 and new exchanges were established with Czech and Belgian clubs which still exist to this day.

The first event took place in 1989 and was won by Pavel Klimes of Czech Republic, beating John Boyes of Bournemouth and Bernie Berger of Euskirchen to give a true international result.

But the main emphasis of competition was still T/F and XC. There were no road running leagues in place in those days but that was to change when we entered the Hampshire Road Race League a few years ago. This has given some healthy competition on the roads to our members and we have managed to make a real impact on those leagues with both our men's and ladies teams in the higher reaches of their respective 1st divisions.

We as a club have come a long way since 1974 but in many ways not a lot has changed. We are still a friendly, enthusiastic and successful club. And long may it remain. Thanks again to all those who have contributed to the last 400 editions. I look forward to reading No. 500 in a few years.

SOUTHERN ATHLETICS LEAGUE *from John Hoare*

Due to re-organisation within track and field athletics in the South of England, the committee have decided, after consultation with Andover AC, that we should take part in the newly formed Southern Athletics League in 2011. As before we will be forming a composite team with Andover AC but the main difference to our athletes is that it is a joint Men's and Ladies league.

This will be a new area for our Ladies who have had little opportunity in the past to take part in track and field. All matches will include non-scoring events for both the men and ladies. There will be 5 matches over the season and dates are:

April 30th

May 21st

July 9th

July 30th

Aug 20th

Venues have not been decided yet but we should get news on these in the New Year. I will keep you up to date as the new league progresses but please let me know if you have any questions.

VIEW FROM THE PAST *from Eric Tilbury*

In the distant past when all Overton Harriers had hair (honestly) and the club had its own minibus (Ford Transit van); I particularly remember one trip back from a Southern League match in the West Country. Various people used to take it in turns to drive & the person at the wheel early on wasn't used to being in charge of a van full of noisy harriers & was proceeding very steadily.

Of course this did not go un-noticed by passengers in desperate need for beer after their heroics & a certain amount of abuse was hurled towards the driver. After a while someone said that at least the scenery was lovely and if they had a camera they could take some great photos to which someone replied "at the speed we are going you could bloody well paint it".

Over the years I have had many similar funny incidents with the club; I have forgotten most of them. I think it's the beer to blame.

CLUB DEVELOPMENT EVENING **19th January** *from Anna Vallis*

The committee would like to invite all club members to attend a meeting/workshop on Wednesday 19th January, from 8:15pm at the Recreation Centre in Bridge Street. This will be an informal evening where we would like to hear the ideas and opinions from members regarding all aspects of the club, to enable the committee to shape the club's future. This will help with the Club's accreditation in the form of "Clubmark" going forward.

Please come along and have your say about what you would like to get out of the club, what we could do differently now & in the future, as well as what we already do well.

After a small amount of persuasion (from Lee Tolhurst and Dave Vosser), the SEAA agreed that the team numbers for the Senior Ladies Inter-Counties team could be increased to 13. The result of which meant that I was then entered to run! The weather in the build up to the event had been freezing and snowy, but fortunately the weather on the day was kind and fairly mild, although there was a strong breeze.

At the start line, it suddenly dawned on me the level of people who I was running with. A small team of senior ladies lined up, my naïve assumption was that there would be a lot more (similar to those at the league events). To this end I felt that we would start late whilst we waited for the others to arrive. How silly!!! The whistle was blown and the team stampeded away and there was me standing there (it was like a cartoon image!). Clearly there were no others and to make things worse I now how the task of trying to catch the fastest runners in the country?!?!? As last to cross the start line I was able to gain on a couple of the girls within the first lap, although I was very much running faster than I would have wanted to at this stage and did suffer by the time the start of the final (and toughest) lap came round.

The course was relatively flat with 2 significant inclines that had to be run 3 times each. The biggest issues were the mud (due to the milder weather) and the strong breeze. Hampshire had there first runner home in 2nd place (Ceri Mitchell) who was 10 seconds outside of a win in a time of 21.42. The team ran outstandingly and came 2nd overall. The course was just over 4 miles and I ran a time of 27.10 and was 48th overall.



FRANNY'S EXTENDED BITS

John has already mentioned how the original newsletter was put together, so what else has changed since edition 1 in November 1976. Well the reports were shorter than which accounts for it only being 3 pages long. A report on 6 members running the Guilford Masters & Maidens Marathon contained only 42 words & never actually mentioned anyone's run. Of the 6 a few are still active at the club; ET. & Franny still race if only occasionally, Paul still trains and was fit enough to pace Cath in the Czech Republic recently while JT still hogs his section of the bench in the changing room.

It also shows that the namby pamby state had yet to take over sport with Paul & myself running a marathon aged 16 (although we had run the previous year aged 15) Paul's time being an impressive 3:18. Elsewhere there is a report on the Andover to Newbury relay. The A team finished 4th and contained three 13 year olds with the B team finishing 6th with a 13 year old Denny in the line up alongside two 11 year olds; Franny and Mick Scoggins.

Fast forward to August 1985 and edition 100 which, to mark the occasion was printed on blue paper & featured a resume of the previous 99 copies. One of our founder members and legendary field event specialist Mike "Geggy" Gregory supplied one of his fabled anecdotes about the Lands End to Overton relay. It was also noted that our club junior section was now defunct with several youngsters being turned away. Good results were recorded at the Basingstoke 10 miles with Paul breaking 54 minutes and JT was collecting Vets prizes in a range of races.

Patrick Hoare narrowly missed qualifying for the final of the English Schools 3,000 meters but still ran sub 8:40 while dad John was the modest winner of the Bionic Hat after beating several of his PB's. Our track team finished third in a completeive match at Reading and one name from that fixture is still competing is Dave Vosser who ran 1:59 for 800 metres in what was a golden age for Overton middle distance running. Dave along with others such as Patrick and his brother Andy rewriting the club records over 800, 1500 and 3000 metres.

A quick trip in the Tardis to rematerialise in February 1994 with edition 200. This coincided with the club's 20th anniversary. Someone had discovered that you could use more than one size of font which changed the newsletters appearance somewhat. Also the odd photo had appeared. Two handicaps took place this month due to bad weather. Heavy snow stopped some people getting to Overton for the Foxdown handicap but the course itself was unaffected as was testified by Hefin Richards winning time of 19:25 with both Denny & Paul also going sub 20 minutes (cue JT & Franny to comment on falling standards) in a field of 21 runners.

A lot more familiar faces now feature including perennial handicap specialist "Swiss" McNair and his other half Sabrina. Others include Keith (Clark), Young Simcox (whatever happened to him?) Gwynneth, Nicky (Wellman), Liz, Cath (Boyle), Bliss, Frank Kenny & Madeline Vosser. Cath finished 10th in the Welsh XC championships & picked up a couple of County vests at Basingstoke & Luton. Bliss ran 32:32 in what was described as a disappointing 17th place at Stubbington with the men's team finishing 3rd. He also came 15th for the civil service in a very high class XC at RAF Halton and was fastest in the month second handicap over the old village course.

Four men tackled Parliament Hill for the Southern Counties; in a field of over 1100 runners Mike was 32nd, Denny 241st, Voss 281st & Keith Clark 490th which helped Keith to that month's Bionic Hat.

Checking back for this article I find that I got involved with the newsletter in May 2000 on edition 274. Has it really been that long? Last leap forward to number 300 in July 2002 and Franny's Bits are well established. Somewhere down the line the front page had received a facelift and the club logo now

appeared. JT supplied his version of this item but reviewed every 50th edition taking half the space with another item coming from previous editor Frank Kenny. Blissly wrote a race report without slugging anyone off & we turned out good contingents at Kintbury, Braishfield, Bourton on the Water, Winchester & Bushy; picking up a few prizes on route. New names include Dave Titcomb, Helen, Karen Burton, Jill, Belinda (who won the handicap), Audra, Moira, Keith V.

Two youngsters, Dave Bush & Jamie Jones scored good points on the track at Battersea. 30 runners ran the handicap over the short lived Nutley Bottom course and for the first time in years I was running well.

So here we are at number 400. The major change in recent years has been the major surge in the picture count. Many thanks go to all who have supplied them, please keep them coming. Strangely I don't seem to appear in any individual photos, perhaps no one has a wide angled lens.

The Bionic hat has come and gone.....or has it!!! But I hope everyone is happy with the way the newsletter is heading. If you have any ideas about improving it please let me know, I may be one of the club's old codgers but am always open to change. Onwards and upwards then to number 500; some time around 2019.

Many thanks to Dave Vosser for supplying this photo taken before the start of the 1979 Combe Gibbet race. When the laughter stops how many can you name ?



CYCLISTS RACE**19th December***From John Hoare*

This event came as somewhat of a relief, the day after the Hants League fixture had been called off for the second time. A race at last!!

Well done to our group for taking a comfortable victory in this annual event. The field were greeted by absolutely freezing conditions with a large covering of snow on the course. The race was won by Lee who did brilliantly to break the 20 minute barrier in such severe conditions and well done to the rest who gained valuable Consistency League points. The full list of results is as follows:

Harrier	Time	Position
Lee Tolhurst	19.53	1
Sean Holmes	20.42	2
Keith Vallis	21.42	3
Neil Martin	22.13	4
Richard Clifford	22.32	5
Dave Bush	22.46	7
Martin Groundsell	23.03	8
Robin Oakley	23.07	9
Mike Bliss	23.44	11
Gemma Wildash	24.34	15
Dave Titcomb	24.37	16
Steve McNair	24.47	17
Piers Puntan	24.58	18
John Castelli	25.22	21
Rebecca Brady	25.32	23
Audra Dennison	25.41	24
Kerri Barton	26.29	25
Martin Allen	26.38	26
Lucy Wildash	27.07	27
Mark Dennison	27.16	28
Alistair Paul	27.22	29
Annette McInnes	27.39	30
Robbie Dennison	28.10	32
Kate Groundsell	28.19	33
Eric Tilbury	30.47	36

38 Finished

"Quote Of The Month"

A first time winner this month with Steve McNair coming out with a classic during the Boxing Day run.

"I saw Bliss in the toilet during the club Christmas Dinner; I thought it was strange considering as outside he had a whole golf course to use "

A FEW SNIPPETS OF REMEMBERED EVENTS

from the legendary Mike Gregory

Having been asked to contribute to the latest newsletter, here is my contribution.

The First Run (approx 1974)

It was over a few drinks at the 'Stute talking to a tall bearded Geordie that it was suggested that perhaps the village would like to have a running club, the like of which he belonged to up north. As the evening wore on the drink flowed and the brains addled, the enthusiasm for a run the next day was at fever pitch.

As I recall the next day five "runners" met at Lordsfield; one dead keen Geordie and four less than enthusiastic rustics consisting of E.Tilbury, R.Phillips, (Pip) Tilbury and the now legendary yours truly.

Keith suggested a little trot around the Harrow Way via the Lynch and Silk Mill and back to the school. What we would now call a "Fun Run", two words that do not make good bed fellows in my book. Apart from Keith dressed in running shorts and proper trainers, never before seen by the rest of us, who I think wore our football kit with plimsoles. Pip might have had his dad's knee length ex-army drill shorts on. So off we went Keith jogging in his world, the rest of us sprinting in our world! Pip made it to the railway bridge where he had to have a fag to get his breath back. Bob made it to the Harrow Way and decided perhaps a more sedate ramble to take in the flora and fauna may be more enjoyable. By this time Keith had jogged into the mists with me and Eric plodded on. Halfway along the Harrow Way I am afraid that the constant pounding of my stomach organs had caused a lot of the previous days fodder to make its way to the departure lounge, so with disaster looming I bade Eric a fond farewell and made my way behind the local flora at a speed I did not think I was capable of. We all met back at Lordshill but Keith had showered, changed, had his tea and was waiting to go to the pub by the time we had finished.

Three of us went on to assist Keith and others to set up the club, Pip and Bob felt they were not quite at the peak of physical fitness and declined the offer to join. The rest, as they say, is history and thatn my dear readers is the foundation of your running club (give or take embellishments & memory loss).

Land's End Relay

Mention of the Lands End Relay always brings back memories, not all of them good. One of my most torrid times was taking turns in driving the transit mini-bus with over-night spells accompanying the runner on a bicycle with warning lights to warn other road users of the runners on the road ahead. The bike in question was Keith's wife's shopper with a small glimmer tied on with string fore & aft to represent blazing warning lights. With 3 gears & non-adjustable saddle set to suit a small woman, to say that it was a struggle to keep up with up with runners is an under statement. On one section I set off with Mike Bliss, then at the peak of his running. As I remember the stage ended with a long up hill stretch to the van where the next runner would take over. The problem arose when Mike arrived with the next runner still in his pyjamas. They had been watching the light on my bike which was about a mile away, the distance that he had left me behind!!!

We and the bus did make it back to Overton which, to put it midly, stank of the bodily functions of a dozen humans who had eaten, slept, defecated and, for all I know, made love in for the last three days. We made a lot of money for Multiple Sclerosis but would I do it again.....NO.

My Great Mates !!!

The 1975 Southern League trip to Cambourne in Cornwall was another trip I would rather forget. It all started all well & good with the runners amassing all the points with the field events being covered by the

dregs of humanity. I, being included in the latter group, was pressed into competing in the Pole Vault which was all well & good until the officials decided that, as the high jumpers were clearing a greater height than the Pole Vaulters, they should have the only landing mat available. Consequently, while clearing a match winning 1.65mtrs, I landed awkwardly in the sand & tore ligaments in my ankle. The trip home in the mini-bus was a nightmare with me not knowing where to put my throbbing ankle made worse by a driver who when someone commented on the lovely scenery down this way another wag commented "At this speed you could paint it" !! My pain was made worse by the halfway point meal stop where the unfeeling B"#!*#ds left me in the bus & repaired to a local hostelry. The worst feeling in this world is hearing a crowd of P*!!#d Ar#@*+*s heading back your way after an hour or so, while you have been crying & sobbing in agony in agony & dejection..... AND..... they didn't even bring me back a pint. BLESS THEM !!

Yours Humbly.... The Legendary MGG