



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2004 ISSUE 319

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This Newsletter is typed under Word for Windows 95. Please let Franny have your reports on disk.

Or you can email them directly to me at geoff.cloke@iptest.com and geoff@staddles.fsnet.co.uk

EVENTS DIARY:

6TH	INTER COUNTIES CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS at NOTTINGHAM Josh and Aaron will be representing Hampshire.
13th	ENGLISH SCHOOLS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS at MAIDSTONE Josh, Aaron and Craig will be representing Hampshire Schools and Mark Vardy will be representing Berkshire Schools.
14th	FLEET ½ MARATHON
17th	Open Track Meeting Portsmouth
18th	FOXDOWN HANDICAP
20th	Hampshire Schools XC Championships Years 6,7,8 at Gosport
21st	EASTLEIGH 10km
27th	Young Athletes Track Meeting Bracknell
28th	COMBE GIBBET RACE.
APRIL 3RD	Young Athletes Track Meeting Basingstoke
APRIL	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - DATE TBA
APRIL 23RD	CLUB DINNER AT THE GOLF CLUB

FRANNY'S BITS.

The clubs training weekend in Devon was a great success with almost every adult getting in one or more runs during the trip as well as several visits to local hostelries. Even the weather was perfect for all the scheduled runs, and remained so afterwards for those staying for the whole week. Many thanks to Nicky, Madeline, Keith and Dave for selecting such a great venue and for searching out the training routes. Thanks also to those who helped with the food preparation, which was as tasty, and filling as ever.

By now all of our aspirant London Marathon runners are in the midst of their training programmes and grinding out the long and lonely miles. Hopefully some of us will be trying to put in some long (15-20 miles) runs on Sunday mornings during early March starting at 9am from Bridge Street. Anyone who wishes to join in for part of a run (or all of it) is welcome.

AGM - End of April

This will soon be upon us, and as always new additions to the committee will be more than welcome. We meet at 8:30pm on the second Monday in the month, and usually conclude our business by 9:30pm.

To help us promote our Club as family friendly, the Committee will recommend a subscription for Family Membership for approval at the AGM. Think about it, and decide what is appropriate. Remember it is your Club.

Hampshire Cross Country League meeting at Wimbourne 7 February 2004 from Geoff

This location was chosen because of it's facilities to stage the presentations and not for it's suitability as a cross country course. The contrast from the previous month's meeting at Ashe Meadows could not be starker. The terrain was flat grassland interspersed with some hardcore tracks, which contributed to a lifeless and very boring course, that thankfully was spiced up with some excellent individual performances.

The Club's under 15 Boys team were first in action over a distance of 4.5Km. Josh Bliss, needing to win this race in order to take the championship, backed off the initial manic dash, but quickly established himself with the lead group. Towards the end of the first lap he found himself a few steps ahead and accelerated to consolidate this position, until he had opened a gap of about fifty metres. From then on, there was never any doubt who was going to win, as he slowly and comfortably increased this lead to achieve an emphatic win. Josh is now the Under 15 Boys Hampshire League Champion and County Champion. Newbury based Thomas Ridley, running in this category for only the second time ran sensibly to finish 31st.

The Ladies were next in action over a course measuring 5Km. The Team only had to finish, to retain the title, but they were taking no chances, and put out their strongest squad. The very fast start suited 1500m specialist, Wales International Cath Wheeler. Cath quickly established herself in the top ten, doggedly chasing her younger rivals and eventually clinched 9th place. Cath was well supported in the team event by Audra Dennison 39th, and Helen Heap 51st. The supporting group, was led home by Nicki Clark in 62nd place, Liz Sandall-Ball 68th, and Madeleine Vosser 86th. During this race the 'Gods' must have been smiling, as the heavens opened up and completely drenched the entire field. But it made no difference, as all the Ladies doggedly stuck to the task in hand, finishing absolutely saturated. Individually in the final League placings, Cath Wheeler was fourth overall and second in the Vet's category.

Next in action were the under 17 Boys over a three lap 6.1Km course. Aaron Harris stuck with the lead group of six from the start and held on at the back during the first lap. Feeling comfortable Aaron went with the breakaway leader finding himself in second place until about a hundred metres from the finish when he was overtaken and had to be content with third. This was by far his best run of the season and moved him up to fifth place in the final League positions. Newbury based Mark Vardy and Robert Ridley settled down in the middle of the field to finish in 16th and 18th places respectively, helping to bring the team home in second place behind the mighty Aldershot.

Last on the course was the Men's Team running five laps totalling 10Km. Andover based Jamie Jones led our contingent home in 24th place, backed up in the team event by Dave Vosser 49th, Martin Crawshaw 77th Greg England 80th, and Keith Clark 108th. Bringing up the rear was Steve McNair 151st and Geoff Cloke 172nd. The team finished third in Division 2 and were fourth in Division 1 of the Vet's League. Individually in the final League placings for the over 40s category, Dave Vosser was 4th, Greg England 18th, Martin Crawshaw was 19th, and Geoff Cloke was 4th in the over 60s category.

Results Hampshire Cross Country League Wimbourne 7th February

Position	Name	Mins	Secs	Category
1	J. Bliss	13	15	U15 Boys
31	T. Ridley	17	06	U15 Boys
3	A. Harris	19	15	U17 Boys
16	M. Vardy	21	08	U17 Boys
18	R. Ridley	21	55	U17 Boys
9	C. Wheeler	16	33	Ladies
39	A. Dennison	18	15	Ladies
51	H. Heap	18	48	Ladies
62	N. Clark	19	36	Ladies
68	L. Sandall-Ball	20	18	Ladies
86	M. Vosser	21	45	Ladies
24	J. Jones	30	28	Men
49	D. Vosser	31	46	Men
77	M. Crawshaw	33	10	Men
80	G. England	33	30	Men
108	K. Clark	35	06	Men
151	S. McNair	37	37	Men
172	G. Cloke	41	34	Men

Some Juniors Results from Geoff

On Saturday 15 February, 15 year old Aaron Harris, a student at Testbourne School Whitchurch, and 16 year old Craig Williams, a student at Brighton Hill School Basingstoke, were part of the Intermediate Boys team that represented Hampshire Schools in a South Eastern Counties Cross Country Race at Wellington College Crowthorne Berks.. The 5.9Km course comprised flat firm grass parkland and a heavy undulating section giving runners a real taste of traditional cross country; English style.

The weather was perfect, and the pace at the start ferocious. Three boys from Essex took control of the race, opening up a small but significant gap over the lead Hampshire runner in the first 400metres. At this juncture Craig and Aaron, who had wisely kept off the initial manic dash, were lying in the top thirty. Beyond 400metres, as oxygen debt kicked in with the more inexperienced runners, they moved up the field and by halfway were well inside the top twenty with Craig shadowing Aaron. Inside the last 400metres Craig passed Aaron, and the boys finished in well deserved 10th and 11th places respectively, and very importantly 2nd and 3rd counters for Hampshire. Both boys along with Josh will represent Hampshire in the English Schools Cross Country Championships at Maidstone, Kent, March 13th.

FOXDOWN HANDICAP.

12th FEBRUARY.

A cold evening for fast times with two PB's recorded on the night. Comfortable race winner Helen Heap knocked almost two minutes from her previous best, and Josh dipped under 20 minutes for the first and presumably not the last time. Greg only just failed to break 22minutes following his very successful Hampshire XC League series and the final results will be down to the wire decided on the last race of the current series on 18, March.

Position	Runner	Finish Time	Handicap	Actual Time	Time Position
1	H. HEAP	30:55	5:21	25:34 PB	13
2	G. ENGLAND	32:00	9:59	22:01	5
3	J. BLISS	32:08	12:15	19:53 PB	1

4	D. WICKE	32:17	2:52	29:25	20
5	I. VOSSER	32:29	7:37	24:52	10
6	A. HARRIS	32:54	12:19	20:35	2
7	M. VARDY	32:56	10:59	21:57	4
8	J. HODGE	32:59	5:15	27:44	17
9	A.HARTLEY	33:01	10:27	22:34	7
10	R. RIDLEY	33.09	10:13	22:53	8
-	K.VALLIS	33:09	12:15	20:54	3
11	C.WHEELER	33:17	10:45	22:32	6
12	S. MCNAIR	33:42	6:53	26:49	14
13	A. DENNISON	33:51	8:38	25:13	12
14	M. WOODS	34:08	6:33	27:35	16
15	T. RIDLEY	34: 28	6:14	28:14	19
16	M. WEST	34:34	5:08	29:26	21
17	J. SANGWAY	34:37	7:37	27:00	15
18	J.THOMAS	34:39	3:51	30:48	22
19	M. BLISS	35:13	10:07	25:06	11
20	D. VOSSER	36:03	11:48	24:15	9
21	E. TILBURY	36:30	8:21	28:09	18

Committee Meeting. 9/02/04

Present G. Cloke, M. Dennison, C. Wheeler, P. Wheeler, G. Mclaughlin.

Apologies N. Clark.

Matters Arising.

- 1) Overton cross country. Amount raised was £200, for car parking given to ORC

Treasurers Report.

Income £341.10
 Expenditure £442.78
 Current £387.98
 Reserve £3755.66

AOB

- 1) AGM Discussion over the venue.
- 2) ORC AGM Monday 1st March. Mark and Paul to attend.
- 3) Football club wish to use club 22nd February, therefore no training for us.
- 4) Handicap Thursday Paul to officiate.
- 5) Notice on board, re: Family membership to be discussed at AGM.
- 6) Combe Gibbet entries already being taken, need to order numbers and more water.

Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Date of next meeting 8/03/04

FINAL HAMPSHIRE LEAGUE TEAM TABLES from Dave Vosser

Congratulations to the Lady Vets who are Hampshire League champions remaining unbeaten all year. The senior men just failed in their mission to get promoted to Division 1, being edged out by Winchester. We paid dearly for the poor result at Farley Mount Next year we will do it!

Veteran Women - Team Aggregate												
		11/10/03		1/11/03		29/11/03		10/1/04		7/2/04		Total
1	Overton Harriers	41	1	22	1	29	1	22	1	24	1	5
2	Farnham Runners	56	3	48	2	43	3	60	4	59	4	16
3	Victory	72	4	71	4	52	4	50	3	84	5	20
4	New Forest Runners	103	7	102	7	79	6	77	7	98	7	34

Senior Women - Team Aggregate												
		11/10/03		1/11/03		29/11/03		10/1/04		7/2/04		Total

1	Aldershot, Farnham & District	12	1	16	1	32	1	23	2	17	1	6	
2	Reading AC	101	8	62	6	59	5	27	3	52	3	25	
3	Basingstoke & Mid Hants	52	3	56	4	96	7	86	4	116	8	26	
4	Havant	95	6	60	5	46	2	182	12	103	6	31	
5	Southampton City	93	5	118	9	119	9	99	6	89	4	33	
6	Overton Harriers	144	9	92	7	108	8	86	5	99	5	34	
7	City of Portsmouth	147	10	161	10	224	16	150	9	103	7	52	
8	Farnham Runners	183	15	191	12	161	12	172	11	172	10	60	
9	Victory	219	16	246	15	202	15	157	10	228	12	68	
10	New Forest Runners	281	20	200	13	260	17	222	14	256	14	78	

Senior Men Division 2

		11/10/2003	01/11/2003	29/11/2003	10/01/2004	07/02/2004	Aggregate						
1	Team Solent	125	1	63	1	60	1	147	1	177	1	572	5
2	Winchester & District	248	2	304	2	445	3	378	3	282	2	1657	12
3	Overton Harriers	582	5	319	3	318	2	308	2	338	3	1865	15
4	Stubbington Green Runners	535	4	324	4	819	6	710	7	393	4	2781	25
5	Alton Runners	730	7	476	5	666	5	381	4	559	7	2812	27
6	Farnham Runners	699	6	557	6	657	4	438	5	571	5	2922	27
7	Hardley Runners	515	3	918	8	0	10	609	6	647	6	0	33
8	Portsmouth Joggers	779	8	842	7	0	10	0	10	767	8	0	43
9	Wessex Road Runners	897	9	959	9	867	7	0	10	0	10	0	45
10	Southampton City	1005	10	972	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	50

Veteran Men - Team Aggregate Division 1

		11/10/2003	01/11/2003	29/11/2003	10/01/2004	07/02/2004	Aggregate						
1	Aldershot, Farnham & District	47	2	37	2	23	1	44	2	54	3	205	10
2	Hamworthy Harriers	50	3	35	1	67	4	57	5	26	1	235	14
3	Reading Roadrunners	118	8	75	5	32	2	29	1	36	2	290	18
4	Overton Harriers	89	6	76	6	55	3	49	4	54	4	323	23
5	Bournemouth	36	1	109	7	79	5	108	7	64	5	396	25
6	City of Portsmouth	54	4	56	3	99	6	143	10	157	9	509	32
7	Southampton RC	93	7	68	4	199	8	123	8	104	7	587	34
8	Fleet & Crookham	252	10	184	8	129	7	46	3	131	8	742	36
9	Eastleigh RC	168	9	0	10	0	10	82	6	72	6	0	41
10	Hardley Runners	69	5	199	9	159	9	155	9	158	10	740	42

Under 17 Men - Team Aggregate

		11-Oct-03	1-Nov-03	29-Nov-03	10-Jan-04	7-Feb-04	Aggregate						
1	Aldershot, Farnham & District	9	1	9	1	6	1	7	1	7	1	38	5
2	Team Solent	36	2	43	2	39	3	40	3	49	5	207	15
3	Basingstoke & Mid Hants	57	3	56	3	55	5	40	4	50	4	258	19
4	Overton Harriers	39	4	0	10	32	2	36	2	37	2	0	20
5	City of Portsmouth	76	7	55	4	0	10	47	10	43	3	0	34
6	Isle of Wight	65	6	0	10	163	6	0	10	0	10	0	42
7	Reading AC	0	10	0	10	50	4	0	10	0	10	0	44
8	Chichester Runners	46	5	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	45

Individual Tables

Well done to Jamie, finishing 16th overall and Martin Crawshaw the only Harrier to run in all 5 races. Greg, Keith and myself ran 4 races ensuring a final league placing.

Geoff Cloke showed the most promise during the year improving his position in every race!

Senior Mens HAMPSHIRE

CROSS LEAGUE 2003-2004

Ini	Surname	Vcat	11 Oct	1 Nov	29 Nov	10-Jan	7-Feb	Aggregate	
			Snr	Snr	Snr	Snr	Snr	Pts	Pos
J	Jones			22	32	30	24	108	16
D	Vosser	v/40	47		53	44	49	193	28
M	Crawshaw	v/40	122	95	85	72	77	329	50
G	England	v/40	106		90	70	80	346	52
K	Clark		144	104	100	93	108	405	58
G	Cloke	v/60	234	207	180		172	793	105

Under 15 Boys - Team Aggregate													
		12/10/02		2/11/02		30/11/02		11/1/03		1/2/03		Aggregate	
1	Aldershot, Farnham & District	7	1	10	1	12	1	9	1	12	1	50	5
2	Isle of Wight	32	3	56	4	35	2	38	2	35	3	196	14
3	Basingstoke & Mid Hants	31	2	33	2	71	4	48	3	50	4	233	15
4	Winchester & District	57	4	70	7	65	3	59	4	62	5	313	23
5	City of Portsmouth	0	10	55	3	50	5	52	5	29	2	0	25
6	Team Solent	77	6	61	5	55	7	56	6	59	6	308	30
7	Overton Harriers	0	10	0	10	0	10	70	7	66	7	0	44
8	Fleet & Crookham	0	10	0	10	51	6	75	8	0	10	0	44
9	Chichester Runners	65	8	65	6	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	44
10	Havant	102	7	0	10	0	10	0	10	99	8	0	45
11	Reading AC	63	5	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	45
12	Eastleigh & District Junior	0	10	85	8	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	48
13	Southampton City	0	10	0	10	77	8	0	10	0	10	0	48
14	Stubbington Green Runners	0	10	102	9	84	9	0	10	0	10	0	48
D	Maughan							92				n/a	
M	Simcox					58						n/a	
M	Bliss	v/40		96								n/a	
D	Henery	v/40						158				n/a	
E	Tilbury	v/60	211			161		129				n/a	
D	Tiltcomb	v/40						130				n/a	
P	Wheeler	v/40		91								n/a	
S	McNair	v/40						151	151			n/a	

VETS HAMPSHIRE CROSS

LEAGUE 2003-2004

Ini	Surname	Vcat	11 Oct	1 Nov	29 Nov	1-Jan	7-Feb	Aggregate	
			vet	vet	vet	vet	vet	Pts	Pos
D	Vosser	v/40	6		8	5	6	25	4
G	England	v/40	21		25	21	25	92	18
M	Crawshaw	v/40	27	26	22	23	23	94	19
G	Cloke	v/60	80	111	81		95	367	59
S	McNair	v/40				77	77		
E	Tilbury	v/60	68		69	59			
D	Tiltcomb	v/40				60			
D	Henery	v/40				82			
P	Wheeler	v/40		23					
M	Bliss	v/40		27					

Well done to Josh winning the individual u15 with a fantastic run at Hamworthy, Aaron's strong run also secured him a 5th overall.

Men U17

Ini	Surname
A	Harris
M	Vardy
R	Ridley
C	Williams

11-Oct	01-Nov	29-Nov	10-Jan	07-Feb	Agg Pts	Agg Pos
8	9	5	7	3	23	5
		18	13	16		
		25	16	18		
6		9				

Men U15

J	Bliss
T	Ridley

	1	2	4	1	8	1
			31	31		

Sorry – no Ladies individual tables available!

A DIARY OF DAWLISH from Elaine Smith

Friday 13th and the Harriers are off for a weekend of training.

Ashcombe country cottages in the heart of Devon were the venue this year. We packed our cases to join our fellow runners, eager to set off and honed to the peak of physical fitness (or something like that).

So what really goes on when a bunch of sweaty runners take off for the weekend?

Friday morning saw a fleet of cars set off from Overton. Stopping in Andover, en route, we picked up Karen – one of our housemates for the weekend. It could have been pure chance, though I doubt it, but it soon became evident by the chinking of cans and bottles in the vehicle that the more thirsty members of the club had been thrown together.

We arrived in Dawlish ahead of the convoy (I think the others were held hostage in the Red Cow at Honiton by Eric). Having gained possession of our key, we dropped our bags and checked out the accommodation.

The cottages were converted barns surrounding a terraced grass courtyard with a wonderful sculptured fish fountain, a swimming pool and children's play area. The cottages featured tiled floors, oak beamed ceilings, fully fitted kitchens and four -poster beds. Most rooms were en-suite (thank goodness, as there were a lot of sweaty bodies to wash each day).

During a prolonged post run babble we discovered that the solitary road linking our accommodation with the outside world was an almost vertical hill. Yep ...the only way is up!

It had become our goal to conquer the hilly course with whoever wanted to run with us. After a very tough 4(ish) miles we showered and collapsed in front of our open fire with a bottle of wine – or was it two?

The rest of our party had arrived by now and we subsequently spent a pleasant evening drinking. We split into groups and reformed for a well deserved dinner.

It wasn't until I joined the dinner queue that I realised how many people were there.

Our group this year was comprised of over forty people (including children and non-running family members) and a more enthusiastic group you couldn't wish for.

Saturday morning we departed our cottages for the 1000m (?) reps that were, in actual fact, one mile reps. These were run in the nearby forest, which we thankfully drove to as the hill to the start was even steeper than the hill we had ascended yesterday. This was probably the highest climb I have made without a belay and harness!

After a downhill jog back home, there was plenty of time to explore the surrounding countryside or relax in the pool.

Our last major outing of the weekend was the Sunday morning long run – thankfully flat, as it followed the course of the River Exe.

After a good ten miles, I was happy to have a hot shower and meet up at the Smugglers' Inn for a huge carvery lunch. I felt safe at this point in any over indulgence as I'd completed more miles in the past three days than I usually manage in a week.

Everybody returned home with full bellies, to enjoy film of the week at Endeavour Cottage – Liz's slide show of the recent events of Overton Harriers.

Many thanks to Nicky and Madeline and their respective families for doing all the organising for such a successful weekend.

If you have the opportunity this time next year you are guaranteed a great time on the Harriers' training weekend, whatever you like to do. And it's not all running!

English National Cross Country Championships - Leeds - 21.2.04 from Mike Bliss

The idea was to travel sedately up to Leeds the day before, have a relaxing night in a hotel close to the course, so that Josh and Aaron were rested and relaxed and ready to take on the rest of the country. Unfortunately, we couldn't beat the traffic jams on the A34 and M1, or Julie's poor navigation skills that led us straight to the course at 7.45 pm on the Friday night and not our hotel, where we were meant to be heading, in another part of Leeds. We finally got into our hotel at 8.15pm, with Josh in extreme distress. Not because of the bad journey, but because we had missed two thirds of the athletics on the TV. Aaron perked up when he realised he didn't have to share the same room as me and Julie (not that we get up to much at our age), but spent the rest of the night trying to separate the double bed in the other room, which he was sharing with Josh.

Race day was bright and sunny. Josh was not. Having walked the course looking as white as a sheet, 45 minutes before the start he decided to give the runners something else to negotiate, by throwing up. Those who went on the training weekend will confirm that his stomach can hold 3 types of curry and 3 puddings, in one sitting, and still want more, yet he couldn't handle one bowl of 'Ready Break' for breakfast. Despite him saying afterwards that he felt ill, heavy legged and awful all the way, he certainly gave it his best shot in the race. The Under 15 course was basically 3 laps curving up one side of a long hill and then zig zagging down the other side back to the start, before a long uphill finish. He had a good start and was 4th coming down the hill the first time. Though he dropped to about 10th going up the hill the second time, he rallied coming down again and went into the last lap in 5th, with only a small gap to 2nd. Unfortunately, going up the hill again, he began to lose places and continued to drift slowly backwards to eventually finish 21st.

Josh was most disappointed afterwards as he was aiming for the top five, and speaking to Geoff afterwards, 5th is also what he thought Josh could achieve. However, 21st in the National Championships is still no mean feat and the fact that he was right up there for much of the race, despite him being below par, shows that a top 5 finish was a realistic aim. Not bad for his first major cross country finish, having dropped out of his first major, the English Schools, last year.

Aaron's under 17 course was a complete contrast to Josh's 3 and a bit laps of grassland. His was the only race of the day that did one complete large lap. That consisted of 1 lap of Josh's course, then out into the country. Mud, steep hills, fast grassland, long uphill drags, woods, everything. Just like one of Eric's Sunday morning training runs around Overton. Before the start, he seemed so relaxed I wondered whether he had exhausted himself the night before. If anyone needs help shifting bedroom furniture, you know who to get to help. After the usual mad sprint by the couple of hundred starters, we first saw Aaron at the top of the long opening hill. He was about in the middle of the field. Afterwards, he said the start was as fast and hectic as it looked and despite trying to get nearer to the front, he couldn't prevent others converging in front of him as they reached the top of the hill. We sprinted through a gap in a hedge and managed to see him at the top of the next hill in the country. Aaron was looking strong and moving through the field. Another mad sprint, and we could shout for him again at the bottom of a hill. We could then see him go around a field, though not close enough to encourage him, before he went further out in the country with no opportunity to see him again before the finishing hill. We had only seen him for about a third of the course and he was gradually moving through. Aaron said that he continued to do so for the rest of the race, and certainly when we saw him again, going up the final hill to the finish, he was still overtaking. Having found himself about halfway down the field after the start, Aaron finished the race in the top quarter, in 61st place. Being in the lower end of the age group, this was a fine achievement and bodes well for the English Schools in March and next season's cross country, when he will be in the upper end.

Unfortunately, we had to leave before the senior mens race to get home in time and therefore didn't see Ian Ford, our one competitor, let alone know whether he had cycled up to Leeds as a warm up.

U15 - 21st - 14.53 - Josh Bliss - about 350 ran.

U17 - 61st - 23.54 - Aaron Harris - about 250 ran.

English National Cross Country Championships - Leeds - 21.2.04 from Ian Ford

Unlike Josh and Aaron I'd left it somewhat later in life to compete in my first National Cross Country Championships and unfortunately with a full days racing programme they had raced and gone before we turned up at Temple Newsome in Leeds. Quite an impressive venue and knowing the grounds the house is set in had assumed there would be a good few undulations - and wasn't disappointed.

Had never been in a cross county field of almost 1,500 and that, coupled with my usual slow start, meant that was well down the field before the massed ranks hit the first sharp corner at the top of the hill and so was reduced to walking round this and the next bend. The first of the three 4k laps was really spent boxed in in a continuous stream of runners and quickly came to the conclusion that it was only going to be possible to gain a few places if you were prepared to elbow your way through and that it was not worth the aggravation, so settled in to run along with everyone else.

By the second lap things had become more open and this improved even more by the last lap, when a combination of distance, hills and a very cut up and sticky circuit in places had started to take its toll. Probably almost as much on me as everyone else although did slowly move forward, albeit that probably lost some 6 to 8 places on the final uphill 'sprint'. Even at that point in the race we were finishing every second and so my time of 50:28 for the 12k placed me in 368th place. Know that am not fit at present and judging by times of those I know I would normally come in front of, recon that should have finished a minute quicker which would have seen me edge into the upper 200's, so at least have something to aim for next year!

British Masters Athletics Federation Indoor Championships, Cardiff 22 Feb 2004 from John Hodge

Moira and I made the trip to this splendid indoor stadium in Cardiff. For Moira it was her first ever Indoors event, and she was encouraged to go as a "warm-up" for next year when she will move into the O/55 age group. ...so she was not expecting to perform well against a group of young 50-year-olds. But being Moira, this was no problem, and in her first and main event she ran a fantastic pb in 31.57 (age-graded 26.45) to take the silver medal.

Later in the day she took part in the 800m, for which she had not been doing any specific training, and predictably she felt this in her legs by the second lap. However, she still managed to complete in 3m 02.91, eight seconds inside the BMAF Merit standard, so was well pleased with her efforts.

I just went for the 800m, and letting two faster guys go at the start, settled in alongside the third for the first 500. I slowed a bit on the third lap, and by the final back straight was about 6m adrift and had mentally given up on a medal. Then I managed to give myself a mental "kick up the back-side" on the final bend, and had enough in my legs to generate a good sprint for the finish, just overtaking the third guy. It was so close in fact that I really had no idea if I had overtaken him or not until the result was posted, to find I had taken the bronze by five-hundredths of a second.. the closest finish I've ever been involved with! My time was not

particularly good, but was close to expectation, and satisfactory on only five weeks of proper training..2m 41.69 (age-graded 2m 08)

It's a great pity more of the Harriers (as we're almost a Vets club nowadays!) don't go for the Indoors... its such a different running experience, and a good sharpener as preparation for the track season ahead.

W50 200m

2nd Moira West 31.57

W50 800m

6th Moira West 3m 02.91

M60 800m

3rd John Hodge 2m 41.69

