

**Overton
Harriers**



**&
Athletic Club**

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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

May	6 th	Fordingbridge 10k
	7 th	Hampshire 10k Portsmouth
	12 th	Shinfield 10k
	13 th	ALTON 10 MILE RRL* Newbury 10km
	16 th	St. Michaels Hospice 10km
	19 th	SENIORS T & F LEAGUE (HARROW)
	20 th	NETLEY 10K RRL* Hook 10 mile
	24 th	SUMMER HANDICAP
	27 th	Kintbury 5 mile Ropley 10k
	30 th	Woodland 5 mile series race 1

Also remember the Park Run 5k's at the War Memorial Park, Basingstoke, Greenham Common, Newbury and Charlton Sports Ground, Andover at 9:00 Saturday

FRANNY'S BITS

Another highly successful Presentation dinner was enjoyed by a large group of club members and following an excellent meal, Kerry, Sean & I made quick work of dishing out the prizes.

Congratulations go to Sean who won club person of the year following a very, very close vote. Robin was a popular winner (despite being absent) of the Most Improved trophy and Moira who received a bottle of her favourite fizz to share with Ken following her magnificent exploits in Finland.

Many thanks to all those people who helped with this years Combe Gibbet race, weather conditions were perfect and it was good to several of our ladies making race debuts and running so well. Congratulations to Sean on winning the race and capping off a fine season by winning the Consistency with Lucy also winning the ladies league.

Bumper newsletter this month with World Championship reports from Finland and marathon reports from Paris, London and Milton Keynes; Harriers go to the most exotic places

Don't forget that after Netley 10k there will be a club barbeque so please sign up for this race.

The AGM brought some changes, Sean is taking over from Lee as Men's Captain after two successful years, Piers will take over the treasurer's role from Sean and Steve is joining the committee.

COMBE GIBBET**1st April***from Richard Francis*

This year's race took place in perfect conditions and Sean took full advantage to record a popular win with a fast run. He had just over a minute in hand over runner up Sam Hall from Newbury with Andover's Mark Curtis some way back in third. Robin had a great run to finish 7th with Keith gaining a narrow victory over Stuart for third Harrier.



Neil Glendon was next home with a very tired Richard Clifford trailing in 4 minutes behind him. Hannah ran the first half quite steadily before taking off in the second half to take the first Lady Harrier prize. Bob has been training well (Brian Hay please note) and seemed happy with his run. I was even happier as I completed my first race since the Braishfield 5 in a time some way faster than planned. Alastair put in his usual solid effort over this course while Lucy had every reason to be pleased with her course debut.....sorry can't count that as a PB. Carole & Sarah were also making their Gibbet debuts and both had great runs to record times that were much faster than I think either were expecting.

Harrier	Gun Time	Position
Sean Holmes	1:36:39	1 st
Robin Oakley	1:47:19	7 th
Keith Vallis	1:51:23	11 th
Stuart Searle	1:51:56	12 th
Neil Glendon	1:53:56	19 th
Richard Clifford	1:58:00	24 th
Hannah Oliver	2:08:08	53 rd
Bob Hawryrak	2:12:13	66 th
Richard Francis	2:14:15	72 nd
Alistair Paul	2:18:31	86 th
Lucy Pearson	2:22:54	98 th
Carole Driver	2:29:50	114 th
Sarah McCann	2:35:03	121 st

OLYMPIC PARK RUN

31st March

from Martin Groudsell

It's safe to say that I may not have taken this run to seriously, especially as I think my entry time was based on a 5K rather than a 5 mile race (my excuse was that it was a busy day at work) but thankfully I was not put into the elite part of the start. It is also true that things look better on a sunny day and while the athletics stadium looked excellent the rest of the park is still a building site. To ensure I stood out I ignored the instructions to only wear the supplied red t-shirt and put the harriers vest over the top, as no one stopped me I hoped it would get me onto the TV but watching the lottery program later that night it didn't. The start to the run was crazy as there was a finish funnel a few meters before the start line to spread out the runners but with some bloke warbling an "inspirational" song (that would not have been out of place at a funeral) while being lifted higher by a cherry picker made everyone desperate to get going.

The run was very flat and for the majority of the run I was overtaking people, however a familiar voice was heard at 2 miles when Keith came past me. I managed to hold a slightly faster pace than at Eastleigh the week before (6.23 min / mile) and as we came into the Stadium we had 2-300 meters underneath the stands which had Chariots of Fire playing on loud speakers, very cheesy but much better than the bloke howling at the start. After a sharp turn we joined the running track (which for some reason I thought would be blue) and then it was 300 meters in front of around 10,000 people so it was time to put a good kick in. The finish came round quickly, I tried to have a look for Kate but I had no chance of spotting her so I tried to overtake a few more people down the finish line and then it was done.

For a run around a building site it was a pretty good day out. My time was 33 min 9 seconds but the Garmin tracked the run as 5.2 miles so if it had been a true 5 miles it would have been a PB. I also don't feel bad for cutting nearly every corner now, as even with cutting the corners and taking the racing line it was still well over 5 miles.

HURSTBOURNE 5

14th April

Some heavy overnight ensured the this years race was going to be a tad slippery though some may not have expected the mud bath that greeted them at the top of the hill. The runners set off with the rain still falling and Sean set out quickly and was rewarded by winning the King of the Hill prize on route to a fine second place behind a runner who he had beaten a fortnight earlier in the Gibbet race. Robin continued a fine run of form to take fourth place and was unlucky not to pick up a prize.



Neil Martin was almost a minute behind in fifth, hotly pursued by Pete who took first Vet 40 prize and Neil Glendon. Stuart led home Keith (who was having a pre marathon thrash) and Richard completed an enjoyable experience to complete the top dozen.

Dave Titcombe did well to break 40 minutes in the heavy conditions while Kerri's fine effort was rewarded with the third senior ladies prize. Further down the field Sarah continues to improve and was one of the few to run up the last hill without stopping. Monique was a minute further back and appeared to have enjoyed the muddy conditions and is starting to show signs of improved form.



Harrier	Gun Time	Position
Sean Holmes	31m 27sec	2 nd & KOH
Robin Oakley	32m 36sec	4 th
Neil Martin	33m 30sec	5 th
Pete Williams	33m 44sec	6 th (1st M40)
Neil Glendon	33m 50sec	7 th
Stuart Searle	34m 20sec	9 th
Keith Vallis	34m 33sec	11 th
Richard Clifford	34m 44sec	12 th
Dave Titcomb	39m 56sec	29 th
Kerri Barton	41m 27sec	32 nd 3 rd Lady
Sarah McCann	48m 23sec	69 th
Monique Van Nueten	49m 24sec	78 th

Thank You! *from Greg*

Cold, wet and muddy.....perfect conditions for tackling Hurstbourne Hill! Despite a few hiccoughs such as 20 tons trees blocking the course, the day was heralded by all as a great success. This is largely down to the efforts of the marshals, helpers and officials.

Small events like this could not survive without your support, so many thanks to Eric, Martin and John for helping me set-up the course on Friday, Martin and John for officiating, Ed for massaging and Geoff, Jamie, Mike, Mark, Paul and JT for marshalling. Once again, the course was completely cleared of tape and debris, thanks to the wide load at the back, Franny. An excellent job by all!

Congratulations to Sean who retained his King of the Hill crown, Pete who was 1st V40 and Kerri who came in as 3rd SW!

Even Richard managed a smile.....although the manic grin did scare a few spectators!



THE PARIS MARATHON

15th April

from Lee Tolhurst

Thursday

Everything started a day early Jayne & I as we left home for the long trip to Paris, practicing our running to make the train to Waterloo. The Eurostar was relaxing the perfect way to arrive then the Metro across to the Hotel and everything was going brilliantly until we went to check in. The Hotel failed to read the booking slip from RW/ASICS correctly so we didn't have a room, as luck would have it a spare room was found. After a lovely meal at a local Italian, it was time for bed, without supper, I just couldn't keep up with the food Ruth recommended for Carb loading. By this stage I had given up Alcohol (50 days), fizzy drinks (20 days) & Coffee (5 days) so was having serious cravings.

Friday

Rather ambitiously Jayne & I decided to take a stroll to the Eifel Tower as it looked quite close, it turned out to be 2 miles away, still we made it, and then walked up the stairs to the 2nd stage. That was fine as long as we headed back on the Metro, well no, we wandered over to the Trocadero, not far that's OK, then we decided to walk the mile to Arc de Triomphe a bit far perhaps, still we will get the Metro back now, again no, we walked the Champs Élysées instead...then we got the metro back to meet the other runners Colin (target 3:15), Rosie (target 3:30), Craig (target 4:15) & Emma (target 4:30), plus the coaches (Steve & Sam), the Runners World Crew (Alice, Neil & Richard) and ASICS (Stacey) arriving and sorting their rooms out (organisation wasn't the hotels strong point).

After a quick change it was off to the expo to collect our numbers and excitingly it was the first time I have had a number with my name on and a yellow stripe marking me out as being on the Preferential start as faster than the sub-3 pen. After some time spent browsing with Colin and Craig I picked out a Mug and tech T-shirt, both will be in regular employ. It was then Emma took the plunge and became a hoodie for the first time. The rest of expo was a dangerous place, with so many tempting races from Medoc to Guadeloupe, making me think, what next...

That evening another we had another wonderful meal in an equally divine Italian. Soon it was time for the athlete's and dutiful partners to head back to get some rest leaving coaches, RW and ASICS folk relaxing.

Saturday

First thing Rosie, Colin, Steve and I went for a wonderful run along the banks of the Seine to the statue of liberty at easy pace with two strides at marathon pace, where it was smiles and easy chat all-round.

The tension was rather more noticeable so to defuse it we all went to the Notre Dame, possibly to offer a last prayer or in my case to simply watch the world go by. By this stage I had become quiet(ish) as thoughts move the next day but the banter at Esmeralda's café was enough to perk things up. At this stage there was a slight athlete led rebellion and we decided the meal that evening had to be earlier so we could be in bed by 10pm so off went Stacey & Neil to sort that out for us, even though the restaurant didn't take bookings or open at 6:30

After a dash back to the Hotel and a quick change it was the final photo session in the Jardin des Tuileries and as Emma looked like a model having her picture taken and being interviewed she was pounced on by the Gendarmes, not once but twice. I, however, was not bothered by them, hrrumph! The evening meal went off to the most part OK apart from Jayne & Emma not getting their meals at the right time, but it was worth waiting for, as it was again delicious. Despite the hiccup we were all back and tucked-in by 10 o'clock, I was snoring by 10:05 despite the nerves.

Sunday

Race day...kit was packed and perfect, 16 weeks of training completed, Carbs loaded, I was ready and pretty much focused...so focused some of this is remembered through a bit of a haze.

6:00 Alarm call from Stacey time for Breakfast

6:50 Taxi's to the ASICS area at the finish to drop off our bags, I do not remember this journey at all.

7:05 annoying security gets in our way to the ASICS area and won't let us through, then lets athletes through but not family, eventually after standing in the cold for 15minutes we are in and can relax again.

8:15 time to depart for the start a 1km walk, a few photos on the way and judging by them I was scared, very scared, Jayne tried to calm me down, then I had to hand over my clothes and get truly cold as I went for short shorts, vest and racers,



weighing in total less than 400g at this point I realised I had forgotten the bin bag, doh! Still I found a new one later. Still scared I was about to enter the runners only area before the start, when Steve (my coach) stopped me, looked me deep in the eyes and gave me the perfect pep talk, don't go off too hard, stick to the plan 6:12 miles 'til halfway then accelerate, you will do it...I was ready. Colin and I jogged to the start and after a hand shake we went into our respective pens.

8:45 BANG we're off...

Mile 1 (6:14) While there were plenty of runners around as we went down the Champs Élysées, it was still possible to run at marathon pace. I kept checking my watch was it the right pace? Yes bang on, no too fast, oops too slow, but mostly correct.

Mile 2 (6:10) I was now starting to get into my running, feeling good and passing people regularly and at this time started to pass some of the wheel chair racers who went off 5mins ahead. Still checking my watch but pretty much happy with the pace.

Mile 3 (6:06) Just as we came to the place de Bastille where the crowds were very vocal, I came up to the back of a group and settled into their pace as it felt perfect, I would now follow them for the next 7 miles. This was the first water station, so I took a bottle, gulped down 3 mouthfuls, despite needing to pee, this would last the rest of the race. The 5km split was 19:24

Mile 4 (6:06) Still feeling good and in the groove with group, the two guys at the front were happy to take a stiff breeze, albeit as we flowed downhill.

Mile 5 (6:00) A few minor undulations felt as if they were slowing the pace slightly and I was no longer keeping an eye on the watch just running comfortably, this was excellent.

Mile 6 (6:07) We were out of Paris and into Bois de Vincennes, past Paris Zoo, everything felt good. I was happy to stay at the back of the group and be pulled along, slotting in again after taking another water. This time I spotted the bins which had a backboard to throw at, which I hit bang in the middle. As if by magic Steve appeared we exchanged a few words as everything was going well and staying on plan before he dropped back to catch Colin. 10km in 38:34, last 5km in 19:10.

Mile 7 (6:11) As we went around the park, I remember thinking "I got lost here on a dark February evening and felt like crap" how different things were now, completely in control romping along.

Mile 8 (6:05) Still in the park, I had been warned the crowds were often sparse, far from it they were there and gave you their full support which added to the feeling of euphoria as I continued to feel great.

Mile 9 (6:04) Still in the park feeling good as we pasted the velodrome still cranking out the same smooth pace without any issues or feeling in the least fatigued. As we approached the water station I took my first gel, as I moved out picking-up a bottle the rest of the group went straight on ignoring the water. I must have accelerated as when I moved back across I had made 10m on them, decision time do I drop back or push on? Whilst deciding I hit another bin and that was 2 from 2. 15km in 57:44 Last 5km in 19:10, now that is even pace.

Mile 10 (6:09) I pushed-on catching the group ahead as we headed into the wind, again sitting at the back to gain maximum advantage, Steve popped-up from nowhere giving me more encouragement and exalting me to produce more of the same. I would find out later he thought I looked in great shape and fully expected me to break the 2:45 even at this early stage.

Mile 11 (5:53) My favourite mile of the race, still in the park, the crowds were thin so I could spot Jayne, Sam & Alex easily, this was a real boost and put a renewed spring in my step producing the fastest mile of the race.

Mile 12 (6:04) Back on pace, however for the first time I noticed my Garmin miles and the course miles were about 200m out and my Garmin was going off first, so I needed to make sure I had something in hand for the end. At the end of this mile we exited the park and onto the first set of cobbles, not too bad. Another drink was taken and feeling good as I hit the bin, that was 3 out of 3. 20km in 1:16:42 last 5km 18:58.

Mile 13 (6:07) Very exciting this as we edged toward halfway; but I entered these next two miles with a little trepidation, as on my training run in February this felt like a hard climb that dragged on and on. In reality this mile was downhill if anything, I must have really struggled that night.

Mile 14 (6:06) Halfway came and went and I went through 10secs ahead of plan in 1:20:50, I have never run this consistently or close to plan ever in my life, I go off to hard then hold on, Steve talk at the start was working. By this stage we made it back to Place de Bastille where the last 400m did have a slight incline.

Mile 15 (5:56) We now headed down to the banks of the Seine the road was flat and open, just the right number of runners around me, life was great. 25km in 1:35:40 last 5km in 18:58, this was so even and consistent reading it now makes me wonder if it was really me.

Mile 16 (6:04) The Runner's World crew were on the roadside just past Notre Dame and they were very loud giving me another boost pushing me to catch a further group. Another Gel went down this time without water, not easy but it helped.

Mile 17 (6:17) All of a sudden things seemed a little harder, not hard but a little harder, still the finish was less than two laps of the village away; bring it on. We were still running along the Seine and the Eiffel Tower was in sight.

Mile 18 (6:12) Arrgh! Underpasses, who put them in the course, they are the Devil's work plain and simple. The first was nearly a mile with not much to see and no air movement a terrible experience. The drink station here was in a shop lined street again I took a bottle three gulps but this time over cooked the throw straight into a shops plate glass window, 3 from 4.

Mile 19 (6:13) More underpasses, 4 in all not as long as the first but down and up, one after another, I couldn't wait for them to be over, then they were, sweet relief. 30km in 1:55:03 last 5km in 19:23.

Mile 20 (6:16) Getting back into groove now, the stride was a bit shorter and a blister had developed on my left foot, not too painful but I knew it was there. We moved away from the Seine getting close to our Hotel, it was here for the first time I thought about the finish. I picked-up a Powerade in a plastic cup at the only sports drink station on the course; this was a bad idea, leading to a very sticky chest and leg

Mile 21 (6:10) Into Bois de Boulogne and into the teeth of the wind, it was now getting hard to keep the pace up into the wind and there was nobody to hide behind, hampered still further by rather unforgiving cobbles. Push-on you only need to stay below 7min/mile and you're there, I kept telling myself. I picked up water this time hitting the bin to make it 4 out of 5, Jonny Wilkinson percentage.

Mile 22 (6:32) The wind was now severely hampering progress, but I was still strong pushing on trying to keep to a reasonable pace, it was this point that I took the third and final gel and this time caffeinated. I seriously recommend these, after a few minutes I felt like I was floating and much of the fatigue was masked. 35km in 2:14:48 last 5km in 19:45.

Mile 23 (6:18) A combination of turning a corner and having the wind at our backs and the gel kicking in produced a faster mile at just the right time, I was feeling good once more as we passed Longchamp horse racing circuit.

Mile 24 (6:29) Turning back into the wind was a painful experience as the pace again slowed and the guy who was leading the group I was with from miles 3 – 7 sailed past, this time alone. This was also



the last water stop, which I took advantage of despite knowing I didn't need to again making the shot into the bin 5/6 not bad accuracy if I do say so myself.

Mile 25 (6:28) Now I was urging myself on, the crowds were sparse but the ones that were there were shouting loudly, often calling my name, read from the front of my vest. I kept trying to focus on technique and the fact it was less than a steeplechase left.

Mile 26 (6:38) Still into the damn wind, but I had realised that I would make it come what may so subconsciously I took my foot of the gas a little. Despite this I caught and passed the chap who led the group earlier and a Clapham Chaser, helping me to 3rd Brit. I knew this part of the course as we had walked it in the morning; I kept the sprint for the last 200m.

Finish 26.1 (5:40 pace) I pushed as hard as I possibly could, sprinting, well running a bit quicker but it felt like flat out sprinting to cross the line in 2:43:59 on the right side of a minute for once!!! I screamed, shouted and punched the air in delight, then there was Sam for a massive hug and the celebrations had started.

Once through the finish, collecting; a medal, t-shirt, poncho, water, powerade and fruit I ran the half mile back to ASICS area to grab Jayne for a massive embrace and to ensure I could watch Colin in. Sure enough he was soon in setting a fantastic PB (3:07), followed by Rosie (3:24), Craig (4:06) and Emma (4:26), as each one came in the atmosphere cranked up a notch. We all knew the party couldn't start until we all had a sparkly medal and PB, then and only then the blue touch paper was lit and we carried on until the small hours helped as we always have been by the coaches, Runner's World and ASICS.



L to R: Me, Rosie, Colin, Emma, Craig

SOUTHERN ATHLETICS LEAGUE – DIV 1 - ANDOVER – 21.04.12

The combined Andover and Overton team got off to a really encouraging start in their first match at the top level after promotion last season. Beaten only by league champions, Southampton, we took a fine second place ahead of Havering Mayesbrook and Luton. Most of the longer distance events were covered by our own club, with James and Sean taking two excellent second places in the 5000m, and Lee winning the 'B' string Steeplechase, and this only a few days after his Marathon exploits in Paris. Our Ladies were also in good early season form with Kerri taking 3rd place in the 3000m and Liz, our county O60 XC champion, scoring good points in the 'B' string.

Meanwhile Robin had his first taste of track racing in the non-scoring events doubling up at 800m and 1500m, being joined in the latter by James, while Neil took on the longer 5000m

RESULTS

Men

5000M	'A'	2 nd	James Knight	16m 32.1s
	'B'	2 nd	Sean Holmes	16m 48.3s
	N/S		Neil Martin	18m 07.5s
3000m S/C	'B'	1 st	Lee Tolhurst	7m 14.7s

800m	N/S	Robin Oakley	2m 20.1s
1500m	N/S	James Knight	4m 36.4s
		Robin Oakley	4m 50.4s

Ladies

3000m	'A' 3 rd	Kerri Barton	12m 24.6s
	'B' 2 nd	Liz Sandall-Ball	15m 09.1s

MATCH RESULT

1. Southampton	253.5
2. Andover & Overton	182
3. Havering Mayesbrook	141
4. Luton	122.5

LONDON MARATHON April 22nd

A clear blue sky greeted our marathon runners at Blackheath with Pete starting on the Green start and the rest starting on the Blue although it was Audra who enjoyed the VIP hospitality in the Championship start enclosure. Our club members had a mixed bag of results and as Pete was the only one to have responded to my E Mail requesting a few lines I have pieced together what I can from brief conversations, the race splits & Facebook comments.

Keith led home the club interest and ran the first 20km at under 4:30km pace and passed halfway in just over 1hr 32min. He gradually slowed over the second half and towards the end was almost a minute per km slower and crossed the line in just under 3hrs 22min.

Hannah's race was probably the pick of the bunch as she took a minute off her PB. What made her run so special was the unbelievably level pacing throughout with her slowest 5k split time being the first one!!!

Pete writes: Training had gone well and was feeling good and felt confident that I would hit my goal of sub 3 hrs, The first couple of miles were slow as they always are in big races but I slowly got into my stride and was running well I did have a couple of quick miles but soon slowed down when I noticed my pace. The crowds were awesome and soon was crossing the half way point in about 1hr 27mins so I was on track ! I kept plodding along at a nice pace then all of a sudden my quads started to tighten very quickly around 18 miles and that was that. I tried running as much as I could but the pain would not go away and even had a helper lay me on the road and stretch my quads out which did help and I pushed on till the line crossing in 3hrs 26mins 48seconds. The lesson learned is that you can do as much training as you can its all about the day and Sunday 22nd April was not mine, Well done to all the other runners from the club and its onto the next one in June.

Audra had a very good first half and was up with Pete clocking 1:27:31 through the 13.1km marker, she slowed over the next 10k before she started to suffer from cramps and slowed even more. She battled on to the finish in 3hrs 31min but although slower than she was hoping for her Facebook comments that evening seemed quite upbeat.

Matt has not been down the club for quite some time so all I have is gleaned from the race results. He ran the first 5k in just under 26 minutes and does not seem to have hit the wall at any point but his 5k just got slightly slower each time to finish in just over 4 hours.

Jill had trained hard for this race but her preparations were affected when she went down with a sinus infection 2 weeks before meaning that she hardly ran in the lead up to the race. Even so she was hoping to hit her target of 3hrs 30mins and set off rather quickly but settled into running consistent

7¹/₂ minute miles, the early stages of the race went well until just after the 20km marker. Jill then suffered an asthma attack and was swiftly being looked after by the superb first aid assistants who put her on a nebuliser until she had recovered. She was then asked if she intended to continue!!! Jill, being Jill, decided to carry on but was now running amongst slower runners and lost further time weaving her way to the finish. She was happy with her time which, deducting the approximate 30 minutes spent with the first aiders, equated to around 3hrs 37mins.

Last (well not even that) was yours truly, I was looking for a Sub 4 hour clocking so set out at 9 minute miles which should have given me 5 minutes to spare at the end. I made a good start and I soon realised that I was running a good half minute a mile faster than planned. By 10 miles I was well ahead of schedule and I crossed Tower Bridge feeling good and soaking up the atmosphere. Just after half way some moron cut me up resulting in me rolling over on my ankle and smacking my knee on a safety barrier. With 3 runners on the deck the guilty party did not hang around to apologise although, if he had, he would have received a good thumping. I kept going for while but it was soon apparent that my day was over leaving me both gutted and angry at the same time. Thanks to Paige & Dave who were soon on hand who made sure that I was OK to get back to the finish via the underground.

Harrier	Gun Time	Position
Keith Vallis	3hrs 21min 56sec	3018 th M
Hannah Oliver	3hrs 23min 05sec	388 th Lady
Pete Williams	3hrs 26min 48sec	3522 nd M
Audra Dennison	3hrs 31min 30sec	703 rd Lady
Matt Grimes	4hrs 04min 37sec	9485 th M
Jill Tuck	4hrs 15min 59sec	3482 nd Lady

36671 finished

WORLD MASTERS INDOOR ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS JYVASKYLA FINLAND

from Moira West

Inevitably the decision to enter is the easy bit, getting yourself ready in one piece at the right time is the tricky bit. As most of you know Ken my husband has been responsible for my coaching and we do have the benefit of staying in Portugal for 3 months in the winter. The training for this competition started at the end of October after I recovered from Shingles. The weekly mixture of training was aimed at conditioning, with 2 gym sessions 2 pilates sessions and 1 easy run and a harder session of hills. The intensity increased during that first month until strong enough to include track sessions . The major change in the training this year was to include a speed session every week right from the start as opposed to bringing it in probably half way through a 12 week programme. Ken thinks this has been a major benefit to the shorter sprints. He has kept an amazingly accurate record of all my training which has proved invaluable. I'm hoping Lee is keeping a diary of training etc. in this very exciting year for him as it is just amazing what information you glean mixing with athletes who perform at higher levels.

As always there are hold ups. An early adductor strain stopped me for a week in Jan and another early in March another week. Those two spells meant the 400m tempo training wasn't completed.

I came back to do the Nationals at Lee Valley, (in my Overton Harrier vest) just to get some running on an indoor track. My 400 was rubbish, I did a false start and then chased a very in-form Caroline Mahler to get Silver but at 74.84 I was not too impressed with myself. The 200 the next day went much better, had got the blocks sorted so a good start and Gold in a good time of 31.9 which was very near my best.

Two weeks later I left Portugal for Finland and the Worlds. Arrived after 3 flights and a train journey to blizzard conditions and -10C cold. Thank goodness we were indoors. These events are very

exciting, running in a GB kit, with nearly 3000 athletes from all parts of the world with really competitive events remembering that masters start at 35 years (babies).

My first was 60m. Ran well against a very quick Australian to take 2nd in the heat in 9.46 a pb, so into the final. Did a really good run for another pb of 9.37 getting Bronze. This is only the 2nd time I've competed at 60m.

My 200 heat went well; I won in 32.03 so again through to the final. I did everything right and concentrated on relaxing in the last 30m to finish in 31.88, another pb, which was just as well as the Finnish girl was only a breath behind me 31.91 and on form should have beaten me. It took 45mins for that result to come through and I was over the moon with my Silver.

The 400 was a straight final and I was extremely nervous and very thankful it was run early in the day. It was in fact Easter day which affected the busses so I walked 30mins through the snow to make sure of being in time at the stadium. I knew the Australian was extremely good and needed to chase but not overcook it as the 400 can be very embarrassing when the legs go in the last 50m. Ken had been texting with tactics so I knew the theory! The Aussie went off with me chasing and at the first bend I was 2nd with an American in the lane inside me, who was very close. I could hear her breathing change as she tried to pass in that first straight but did enough to hold her 'til the break at 150m. I knew she would try again on the straight and from there right around the last bend and into the final straight she was breathing in my ear. Again forced myself to relax in last 30m (how many times has Ken shouted that at me in training!) and she gave up and fantastic another Silver. The noise from the crowd is amazing indoors and really gives you a lift.



The relays 4x200m were later in the day, so warm down, eat, warm up again. Thought the Aussies would beat us but had a good bunch of girls so we decided to try and break the British record – we even practised our baton changing! I was off first and had a cracking run handing over well out in front and from there we never lost the lead and came in for an amazing Gold which when you share it with a team is so good. We waited again about 45 mins for the official results and there it was WR...World record and we were ready to celebrate. We had taken 6 secs off the British record and 1 sec off the world. Our team were me, Anne Nelson sprinter, Nancy Hinchmough 800m/1500m and Jean Fail 60m hurdles. It was well done, our hand-overs were very good and we all ran to the top of our game.

So there it is – at the World Indoors, 3 personal bests, a gold, two silvers, a bronze and a share in a world record! Way past my wildest dreams, and probably never to be repeated, but wow, I did enjoy the moment.

As well as the track, there were x country, field events and walking races. The format is just as at a Grand Prix: call-room, escorted to track, runners introduced, and medal ceremonies with anthems for the lucky ones.

Very colourful, very exciting and an opportunity from the age of 35yrs to compete on a very different stage. Keep it in mind!!!!

I don't know why Claire's Facebook message saying there was a spare place at MK Marathon caught my eye, but it did. When I found out it was a Vet 40 Male place and that he worked 2 mins walk from my office it was without thought that I had exchanged some money and I was in.

Then I reconsidered; you have done no training and your furthest recent distance was a training run on the Gibbet and even then you died on your arse! IDIOT. However I have some history in doing marathons on no training and the last one went OK so that was it; I was going to do it.

Then the worst weather of the arrived on Sunday morning, torrential rain and gale force winds. The race HQ was the MK Dons stadium and unfortunately it didn't provide much shelter and even in my tracksuit I sat shivering waiting. As start time approached the only clothes I dared remove were my tracksuit bottoms; it was too cold, so over usual shorts and vest I wore an additional cotton T Shirt, waterproof jacket, gloves and hat and they weren't removed all race.

The race started on time and whilst there were over three and a half thousand runners there was very little congestion, straight away we were off the main roads and onto what are called "green ways" which is the cycle network around Milton Keynes so the route was traffic free and pretty flat apart from the underpasses and the bridges over the canals. It was however soon apparent that this was going to be a tough race; the course was covered with overlying water and was very exposed to the wind. Within the 1st mile I was absolutely soaked, my feet were sodden and I hadn't warmed up at all.

I had intended to do 9 min mile pace to get home in under 4hours, assisted by a Garmin borrowed from Kerri, but in the cold and wind the plan went a bit pear shaped and I quickened doing about 8 ½ min mile pace. The pacing went really awry at the 6 mile mark where we had to take an extra 400m loop to avoid a severely flooded area; you couldn't see the boundary between the rivers and the path.

I managed to accelerate over the next few miles to make up for the extra distance and got back to 8 ½ min pace reaching halfway in 1:51.12. I was feeling fine aided no doubt be the innumerable gels I was consuming; High5+ caffeine gels were provided out on the course and they are seriously good.

By 20 miles I was expecting the wheels to fall off but they didn't; I kept on churning out consistent 8:25 – 8:30 pace with no major problems though by now the underpasses were getting seriously annoying; they hurt more on the way down than on the way back up.

The last three – four miles were great as I passed loads of runners who had "died" and on the one smallish hill at mile 24 I was the only person who seemed to be running which pushed me to a sub 7:45 mile!

Finish in the Stadium was a slight anticlimax as the spectators weren't really sitting by the finish, which in itself wasn't well marked, so there was very little atmosphere; not as good as Reading Half, but I was pleased with my time of 3'40'42" and the 1'42" negative split!

Got to reiterate how awful the conditions were; many of the paths were heavily flooded and it was extremely windy. To give a measure of it; of the 5000 entrants, 1200 did not start, and over 800 DNF. The winner, for a decent sized flat road race marathon, came home in 2:41.50 and only 23 people finished sub 3 hours.

Harrier	Chip Time	Position
Piers Puntan	3:40:42	516 th (161 st V40)