



The Metro Mouthpiece

The newsletter for Metro Aberdeen Running Club members

Issue 3 August 2008

www.metroaberdeen.co.uk

The nights are fair dra'in' in

Welcome to the latest edition of the Metro Mouthpiece. With the days rapidly getting shorter, it won't be long before the Tuesday night club run will be back to pounding the streets around Bridge of Don in the dark/rain/sleet/snow. Shorts, t-shirts and sunglasses will have been replaced by tights, thermal tops, gloves and hats..... and I for one can't wait. Winter is my favourite time of the year for running.... honestly, what is better than a cold, crisp winter day for running? the sting of the cold on exposed skin and the burning in the lungs, steam rising after a hard run - a hot shower and a mug of tea..... magic!!

I think there's something so much more satisfying about running in the winter, that feeling of somehow having achieved something more..... of having conquered the elements. Mind you, the time two winters ago when I ran 22 miles in ankle deep snow was more like stupidity. This was, however after I had almost lost the will to live after a week of treadmill running due to the conditions, so it did make sense at the time.

Personally, my running plans for the rest of 2008 are in tatters due to a bout of achilles tendonitis that I just can't shake. This coupled with a severe case of apathy has meant that I'm struggling to run more than 3 times a week at the moment. Add to this mix - a heavily pregnant wife and a 10 page list of d.i.y. jobs to be done at home before the baby arrives - safe to say that I won't be setting any new pb's for a while.

It was all planned out so perfectly too: The races were researched, some of them already pre-entered - I was going to smash my pb at all distances and (due to having a "significant" birthday in early September) scoop a triumphant 2nd in the club standards..... the crowd cheered..... cameras flashed..... then I woke up, my ankle still hurts and I can't be @rsed.

In the meantime there's still a few weeks left to enjoy what's left of "summer" and the light nights before the clocks change and thoughts turn to maybe a bit of cross country, some spring marathon training or perhaps just staying in and stuffing your face in front of the tv. Maybe, like me you're just looking forward to running regularly again, injury free and regaining some fitness before the hard work starts in the new year. Whatever your plans for the rest of 2008 I hope it all goes well.

The next edition is planned for December 2008 so get those articles, race reports, jokes, funny stories, pictures and results to me for inclusion as soon as possible at rthomson@talktalk.net

Richard Thomson

Inside this issue

Thanks to everyone who submitted articles and, as usual, I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I did. Again there is a distinct international feel with reports from races in Spain, Ireland and the USA.

Making the decision on which one to award the £20 Run-4-It voucher was the most difficult yet as all the articles submitted were excellent and potentially worthy winners. Turn to page 9 to see the winning article - an inspirational piece by one of our more accomplished and... ahem... senior members. Reading it made me realise that my self indulgent moans and complaints about my current wee injury and lack of motivation are just that - a self indulgent moan, sometimes just being in relatively good health and being able to run should be enough.

Thanks also for the large amount of caption competition entries received - the winner of £10 worth of Run-4-It vouchers is announced on page 12 along with this issue's competition photo.



After blowing the club budget on the last night out, the Metro team bus for the Moray Marathons is going to be a little more "basic"

Boston Marathon

21 April 2008

Lynne Parkinson

It was the 19th April, approximately 1 week before the Boston marathon and my work colleague shuffled into the office sporting a bright red nose, sniffing and cradling a bunch of snotty tissues. I must have thrown her a look that could kill 'cause the first words that came from her mouth were "its ok, I don't feel ill, I just can't breathe". "Oh that's ok" I thought, I'll just run 26 miles with no lungs! Throughout the rest of the week snotty tissues were a plenty and said colleague continued to pile them high right next to my desk. Was she trying to kill me? Realising my workmates really didn't share my passion for running and just didn't get the whole marathon thing I tried, perhaps poorly, to keep my thoughts to myself. After all what's the big deal about training for 4 months, diligently forgoing Friday nights out and relentlessly running up and down hills only to catch a cold just before the race?

Throughout my week of snotty hankie exposure you'd have been forgiven if you thought I was training for the Miss Hypochondriac of the year award. When the tickly throat emerged of course I had laryngitis shortly followed by bronchitis. I really wasn't feeling well at all. Bit dizzy, certainly not 100%. Surely it was some deadly bug that would kill me before I even reached Boston. In hindsight, death might have been a more comfortable option. In addition to my 'illness', I saw it fit to injure myself at every turn, the worst of such incidents occurred when I slipped on a wet bit whilst coming out the shower cracking my chin off a unit and dislocating (ref to the Miss Hypochondriac of the year award) my shoulder as I reached out to save myself. Forget the chin and the shoulder though, more importantly I had landed square on both knees, which ultimately ended up rather bruised and stiff. All in all my final week was not going to plan!

On arrival in Boston 33 hours before I was due to rise and get ready to run I was full of anticipation and hope. After all, my training had gone really well. I'd managed 5 PB's in my previous 5 races, I'd prepared fully for the appropriately named "Heart Break Hill" – and the 'flu' which plagued me the previous week had all but gone. I was going great guns and was sure to crack my PB. Right?

The morning before the race mum and I set about gently exploring a little of Boston. We settled down at a nice restaurant outside on the street to enjoy the sunshine and watch the finish of the Womens' Olympic Marathon qualifiers. That was something pretty special. It seems that the Boston marathon stirs something in Americans that not many marathons do. The entire city gears up for it - restaurants change their menus so that you are ordering landmark sites along the marathon route and hotels change their 'Do Not Disturb' door signs to 'I am tapering'. It's a fantastic atmosphere and one that the Bostonians truly pride themselves on. The Olympic qualifiers only added to that and it felt great to be there. Having never done New York I can't comment but ask a Bostonian and they will tell you it beats New York hands down.

Inside the Expo everything was a buzz. They had previous marathon winners signing posters for everyone and they showed a movie of the marathon route. At this point I was really excited and couldn't wait to get to the start line. I was however also trying to ignore the dizzy feeling I had had since stepping off the plane. It was jet lag. I'll be fine tomorrow...

Tomorrow came and the alarm rang at 5am. I felt good and was raring to go. Boston is a point-to-point course starting 26.2 miles West of Boston in a little town called Hopkinton. As such the Boston Athletics Association provided what seemed like 100's of yellow school busses to transport the 1000's of runners to the start line. Stepping off the school bus I arrived in the 'athlete's village' just before 8am and had a full 2 hours before my wave set off, at 10am. The air was cool and there were plenty of clouds. I couldn't have been happier with weather. The clouds did however hamper the entry of the parachute regiment flown in especially from North Carolina. I did say Bostonians really go to town on this! The two hours passed quickly, I guess most of that was spent standing in the queue for the portaloos and drinking the much appreciated coffee that was on offer. There was also plenty of food - bananas, bagels etc. The organisation couldn't have been better.

At 9:45 we were instructed to make our way to the start. Suddenly the clouds cracked and bright blue skies emerged. I didn't really think about this much at the time. In fact, I didn't really notice it hotting up during the race either. The temperature on the day was the farthest thing from my mind.

Before I continue I have to say that the Boston marathon is a great race. Its organisation is second to none and the spectators are awesome. The hills, well there are plenty (including down hills) but the infamous heart break hill really isn't all that bad... well, not from a walkers perspective anyway! Despite what comes next I can highly recommend Boston. I guess I just had a very bad day!

Standing in my pen (coral), surrounded by runners who have qualified in pretty much the exact time that I did - 3h28. It's organised such that only a handful of mins separates each runner's previous marathon time in each coral. It's pretty much impossible to lie your way into the wrong coral since you must provide evidence of your time, this eases congestion. Another example of the superb organisation.

Continues over...

....Cont

Due to slight over crowding in a narrow street I started at a fairly slow pace, but this was good. Things soon picked up and by mile 2 I was running pretty much bang on pace. At this point it was downhill and it should have felt easy but my heart rate was telling me I was struggling. By mile 5 there was still no improvement, in fact, things were getting worse. My heart was now beating at 183bpm and I was starting to feel quite bad. I was also gasping for water and the freeze pops dished out by the spectators were a welcome relief.

By mile 8 I realised I was in trouble - 188bpm. Sure, my heart rate has beat in the mid 180's before, on a Thursday night at reps! I have never heard Jackie asking us to do 26 miles worth of 400m sprints. My heart rate had to come down or I'd never make it to the end. I was light headed and felt totally beat. I started to walk and my heart rate dropped, albeit slightly. Since there was no shift on 180, I decide to head off and get running again. By mile 10 I had a heart rate 195 and I found myself stotting across the road in a less than straight line towards a road-side bush where, in front of an alarming number of spectators I promptly disposed of my breakfast. Nice! From that point onward I don't think I managed to run one mile in its entirety. Any excuse (and I was looking for them); water stop, oranges, a hill and I was walking. The only part I managed even a vague smile was at Wesley Girls College approximately half way. They really do live up to their reputation and you can hear them about half a mile before you see them. It was a hot day, a few of the guys had their tops off the girls were going nuts! Thank you Wesley Girls. I briefly forgot my pain.

Eventually, the 'CISCO' landmark was in view and I was just one mile from home. Surely that was a welcoming sight? Eh, no! One more mile felt like a completely unachievable distance and I really wished people would stop telling me to "keep running, your nearly there". Oh how I wished I'd not slapped my name ALL OVER my top!

I did eventually cross the finish line, 4h 2mins after the gun. That last mile took me 12.5 mins. I must have looked dreadful when I finished cause I was promptly plonked into a wheel chair and carted off to the hospital tent for medical assistance. A highly humiliating experience but I really appreciated the seat! Inside the tent I felt decidedly good about my state of health. At least I wasn't chewing on my space blanket trying to get to grips with the pain of cramp in every fibre of my body and at least my space blanket wasn't being used as a make shift curtain to hide the Doctors best attempt at heart massage. A true eye opener! Perhaps I didn't have such a bad race after all.

As I lay on the make shift bed being fed crisps and juice I truly swore that I was never running a marathon ever again and I meant it - NEVER AGAIN. We're just not meant to run 26.2 miles. It's not normal and it's not healthy and the evidence was all around me. Besides from which my poor panic stricken mother would most likely do her very best to prevent any such future antics. From now on I vowed to stick to half marathons and 10k's ! Some vow that turned out to be. 5 weeks later I crossed the finish line in Edinburgh with a new PB of 3h 25mins.

Job done, demons exorcised, **revenge on the 26.2!**

Silverstone Half Marathon

9 March 2008

Jane MacLeod

My husband is a great formula 1 fan and as his sister lives about 40 miles from Silverstone - the home of British Motor racing so we took ourselves down for a long weekend. This was my first race since I had surgery on my foot so I wasn't expecting great things, just looking forward to having a go on what would be a flat course. The road to Silverstone is well signposted and parking is plentiful. There is however a 15 minute walk to the start. There are various stalls selling everything your heart could desire from breakfast through to burgers baguettes, coffee and even ice cream. The garages are open for you to sort yourself out and I was glad I had my fleece and thick trousers as the floors are polished granite and therefore very cold.

Nigel Mansell started the whole thing off and around 3000 of us were away to the sound of the old formula 1 music, round the race course then out on to the supply roads. It was incredibly windy and freezing. Being flat is a good thing but since it used to be an old air field at the time of the second world war, it is also open to the elements so that for me was a very bad thing. At times the wind was so strong I was barely moving and then the sky darkened and the hail started. The runners snaked along the roads and you could hear the gasp as one by one the hail storm reached them.

Liz Yelling the first lady to finish described it as in ice cream headache and she wasn't wrong. I can't deny it was very exciting to be running round the race course on the day that the formula 1 season started - albeit in Melbourne and in much better weather. It was nevertheless the longest 13.1 miles I have ever run. The medal and T shirt were certainly hard won.

Windermere Marathon

18 May 2008

Niku Millott

Brathay Windermere Marathon "The Beautiful Marathon"

When people are asked how to describe the Brathay Windermere Marathon, the most frequently used words are those such as "hilly", "tough", "hilly", "scenic", "well-organised" and "hilly". I'm not sure why I thought entering this race was a good idea at the time, I think I just chose to ignore the "hilly" references and focus on the positives of a weekend away in the Lake District.

I won't bore you with my training schedule as this is supposed to be about the race and not me, so I will keep the preparation bit short. Apart from one nasty ankle injury whilst in my final hard training a few weeks prior, training (including many long hilly runs) and taper, was good. I always feel a bit sluggish the week before race day – but this, like the night before anxieties and the 'big-day butterflies', are all part of the fun!

The start/end of the race is situated in the beautiful grounds of the Brathay Hall Trust Estate overlooking Lake Windermere. Only a couple of miles away from the outdoor-enthusiast's town of Ambleside. This made for an ideal base for a long-weekend in the area, with suitable pasta dishes to be had the Italian prior to race – and plenty of pubs for celebrating after. The race is held in conjunction with the 10 Marathons in 10 Days challenge, and Brathay Open Day – making it great day out for the family. In fact, there were so many things going on (kayaking, canoeing, rock-climbing, tree-abeiling, high-ropes course, BBQ, bar, live music, massage, and a number of stalls), you almost felt unhappy about leaving the festivities behind as you were led out by the drummers to run round the lake.

The start was seamless, non-congested and a refreshingly pleasant beginning to what was to be a difficult race. The first four miles are closed to traffic, on undulating minor roads. Conditions were good, with a nice light cool head wind, which made the heat from the sun bearable. The only poor bit of organisation of the whole event came shortly after, when the marshals allowed the co-race leader and I to make a wrong-turn (still following the pace-car), we then took a short detour, before rejoining the back of the new leading pack.

At mile 7, the first major hill came along, so steep that it slowed the pack down to almost a fast walking pace. Then some downhill, followed by some undulating quiet roads took us to the bottom of the lake and the eagerly awaited halfway point. By this stage the leading pack were pretty spaced out, and the climbs here and at the 14 and 15 mile markers felt increasing difficult. The road was also a lot busier with holidaymakers etc on this side of the lake making things more difficult. I was stuck to the left-hand side, negotiating pavements and pedestrians. I don't think I have ever seen so many marshals in my running career – well, except London maybe, but for a smaller marathon it was quite extraordinary!

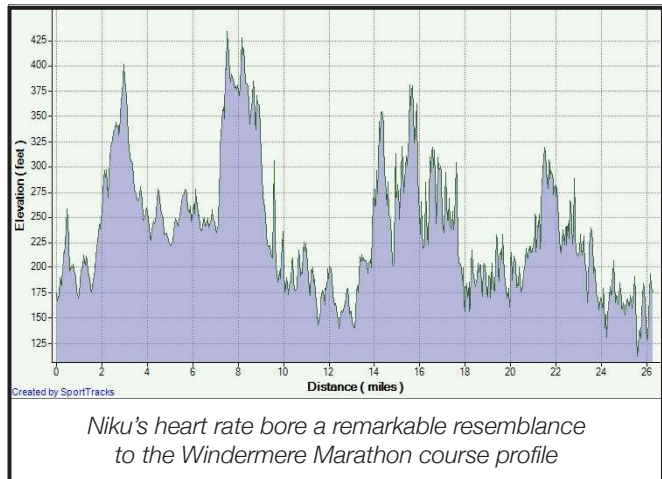
The undulating course didn't ease, and when running and looking up towards the toughest hill of the race at mile 20 – the thought of quitting did come into my thinking. My legs were in agony running up this 1.5mile hill and I starting cramping up in all areas. "Got to keep going, you can do-it!" I kept saying in my head, at times out loud. Passing last year's winner a mile later gave me the confidence boost I needed to put the pain out of my head. The undulating route continues through Ambleside, and the sting in it's tail was the last 100m which was basically up a steep hill finishing on the front lawn of the Brathay Hall in front of a cheering crowd.

Drinks stations were equipped with Sports-capped bottles of water and difficult to drink cups of SIS energy drinks. I had used a few gels and probably not enough water (not even attempting to drink out of the cups), and I think this is the reason why I felt so bad when I finished. Some hydration, and a hot shower later, and it was time to join in the fun.

The festivities continued well into the afternoon with a majority of runners completing under 5 hours – including Scooby Doo. I celebrated my PB (02:47:39) and a 3rd place finish with a pint of some fine local ale and a well-deserved Cumberland Sausage from the BBQ.

I would recommend this race to anyone who is up for the challenge of hilly a marathon (who doesn't think the Elevation chart looks scary) and wants a great weekend away in the Lakes.

So, who's up for it next year then?



Death Valley Marathon

2 February 2008

John Shields

If you need a bit of variety in your long run training for London or Lochaber, or an alternative to the Lairig Ghru, take a break from the Aberdeen winter weather and head west to Death Valley for the EnviroSports Death Valley Trail Marathon in February. I am currently living in Houston, Texas for a few years and normally run on the local boring flat concrete roads so when my friend Steve from California suggested meeting at the Death Valley race it seemed like a good idea. At the north end of Death Valley National Park is a 26.5 mile long jeep road called the Titus Canyon Road. It runs from Nevada at the eastern end to California at the western end over two passes, climbing around 2,300 feet before descending 5,000 feet in the second half. I took the easy option to get there, flying in to Las Vegas with my wife then renting a car for the 2-hour drive up to Death Valley. Steve and his running mates from Sacramento, California rented a mini bus and drove for about 9 hours to get there.

Saturday the 2nd of February dawned bright and clear and we assembled at race HQ to hear the good news that the course was declared open by the park rangers. It had been closed for a few days previously by winter snow storms. When the Titus Canyon route is closed they run an alternative route along the West Side Road, another road lower down in Death Valley.

The field is limited to 300 runners, most doing the Marathon route and a smaller proportion opting out of most of the uphill sections to run the last 30K of the route. Dave Horning, the guy behind EnviroSports, gave us the pre-race briefing with plenty of humour, good advice and even a communal singing of "America the Beautiful". He told first-time marathoners that the course is fast and flat with distance markers every mile. He also gave good tips about where to stop and enjoy the view and promised us that any time taken for photographs or sight-seeing would be automatically deducted from our finish time. A fleet of yellow school buses ferried us to the start line. The atmosphere was very friendly and casual and the start just sort of happened when everyone seemed to be ready, signaled using the brake lights of the race director's car. There are no mile or other distance markers on the course and the aid stations are at approximately 5 mile intervals so most people carry a water bottle and/or some energy gels. There are also no access points for spectators after the race has started so you will not see your friends and family again until the finish line.

The first 10 miles are a steadily increasing gradient and about 1500 feet of altitude to the top of White Pass and a welcome aid station. I had run the Houston Marathon 3 weeks earlier and my calf muscles were very tight on the uphill section. (Must remember to do those stretches more often!) After the initial slog, the course just gets better and better. A steep descent down into a valley then revealed views of the big climb up to Red Pass – a switchback trail going almost 1000 vertical feet in a distance of just over a mile. At the top of Red Pass there were a few snow patches across the trail but soon it was steady smooth downhill running with occasional pauses to take photographs and for the 15 mile aid station at the ghost town of Leadfield, well stocked with energy drinks and snacks. After Leadfield, the trail goes into its most spectacular section as it negotiates Titus Canyon with rock walls hundreds of feet high and in places only as wide as the trail. Another aid station at 20 miles gets the runners fuelled up for the last stretch down the canyon. Suddenly at 24 miles the canyon ends and the trail emerges out into open desert, luckily still sloping downwards, to the finish which is visible as a line of cars and buses parked on the park road. As you run towards the finish it seems to be heading away from you across the desert but eventually it gets closer and there's a small but enthusiastic throng of people cheering you across the line. I finished in 3:59:41 with the best negative split performance ever – 2:20 for the first half and 1:40 for the second half.

The Sacramento support team had thoughtfully brought a cooler full of champagne with them so we were able to celebrate in style before the bus ride back to race HQ and a post-race party back at the Corkscrew Saloon at Furnace Creek Ranch which was where we had registered that morning. Most people seemed to stay around and party for a while.

This was one of the most enjoyable Marathons that I have done and I would definitely recommend it to anyone looking for a change from running on the roads.

There are more details of the Death Valley Marathon and other EnviroSports events on their web site: www.envirosports.com/events



John and friends celebrate in style, post race

Barcelona Marathon

26 March 2006

Donald Simpson

I decided to submit this story to the metro mouthpiece even though I ran this marathon in 2006, before I joined metro. The reason being it might help other members not to make the same school boy errors I made.

Me and some of my mates decided to run a spring marathon and after being rejected by London we decided on Barcelona as a nice jolly... I mean run. When we landed in the Catalan capital I was horrified to discover my bag hadn't made it! School boy error number 1, always take your running gear in your hand luggage! Not to worry I thought, they have the whole day to get it to me and there is a flight 2 hours after mine. Luckily I wore my trainers on the off chance but I had nothing else with me. After being assured that my bag would arrive we set off to the hotel and then to registration. When I came back to the hotel late in the afternoon my bag still hadn't arrived! One of our party was fluent in Spanish and phoned up the airline to be once again told that the bag would arrive. Re-assured but still worried I decided to go out and buy new kit. On arriving back at night school boy error number 2 became apparent, the hotel did not serve brekkie on a Sunday morning until after the race started!

The next day I got up and surprise, surprise no bag, so I had a big decision to make. I either run a marathon in the same pants that I had not only worn for two days but had also slept in or run commando... none of us could come up with a good reason why I would be "vasing up" with no pants on in a crowd so I decided on the former. I spent the next 20 minutes running around trying to find somewhere to eat, luckily I found what I can only describe as the Spanish Chalmers bakery! An all butter and chocolate croissant severed by a Grotbags look alike (I half expected to be greeted by the words "fit ya wantin?") and I was off to the starting line in my new kit.

The route itself is a good tour of the city, it starts at the Placa de Espanya, round the Nou Camp, at 20k you pass the stunning Cathedral de la Santa Creu i Santa Eulalia which I think they have been building for 500 years in parts. Then onto the pont de calatrava bridge, down onto a magnificent marina used at the 1992 Olympics at 35km and back to Placa de Espanya.

My plan was simple, follow the 3:45 pace maker, she had a big balloon tied to her so I didn't think it would be a problem. The race started and I passed my foe at 5km and thought, that's the last I'll see of you... or words to that effect. Unfortunately for me the temp hit 20 degrees and I began to struggle at 30k. At 35k I began to look around and to my relief no sign of any balloon. At 40k the pace maker flew past... without the balloon. School boy number 3 don't rely on the pace maker! After about 2 minutes of chauvinist expletives I regained my composure but the damage was done and I finished just behind her, exhausted.

I went back to my hotel for a well deserved rest to discover... yes you guessed it no case. So after a ceremonial burning of the pants I headed out for a night on the tiles and came home in the early hours to see my beloved case had arrived just in time for me to leave the next day - Hurrah!!

The next day we did the stadium tour round the Nou Camp and some sight seeing as we had most of the day before our flight, ended up getting back to Aberdeen at 9pm... Eh with no case - the useless feckers had lost it again!!!!!!



Gavin Reid organised his own drinks station for this years Dyce Half



Run-4-it have 4 stores throughout Scotland - Aberdeen, Edinburgh and 2 in Glasgow and are Scotland's only independent chain of running shops. They carry a huge stock of running shoes, clothing and accessories and have a dedicated team of knowledgeable staff on hand for any help or advice you may require.

Metro members will get a 10% discount at any of their stores, just discretely show your membership card when making a purchase.

Find Run-4-It at:

Aberdeen
21 Holburn Street
Tel: 01224 594400

Edinburgh
108 - 110 Lothian Road
Tel: 0131 2283444

Glasgow City
57 Bothwell Street
Tel: 0141 2214300

Glasgow - Tiso Outdoor Experience
50 Couper Street, Townhead
Tel: 0141 5595450



Meet the Boyz

**Name:**

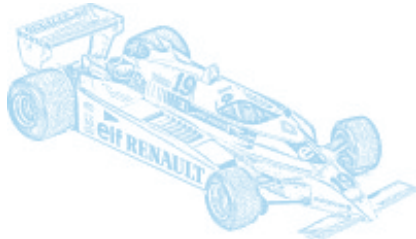
Steve Forbes

Age:

42

Occupation:

Sales Advisor for Hydrasun

**How long have you been running and what triggered your interest?:**

On and off for 25 years - watching Coe v Ovett at the 1980 olympics, i was an ovett fan.

Why did you join Metro and how long have you been a member of the club?:

I joined Aberdeen AAC as a teenager but i was useless at track and field so when metro was formed I joined straight away as i wanted to be a road runner. I gave up running for about 5 years to become a tv sports fan with a beer in hand but started to jog again in 2002 as I was beginning to look like a sumo wrestler and wanted to get fit again, I rejoined the club in 2004 - all the old faces were still there... with the same old injuries.

What's the best thing about being a member of Metro?:

No matter how fast or slow a runner you are there are always runners of your level to train with/go to races with and give you encouragement (or stick) plus the odd metro night out.

Any secrets/scandals/embarrassing stories about any fellow club member/s?:

Glen Clova half marathon, drinking weekend 2006 - what happened that weekend? I can't remember either... Gavin Reid???

Phil Cowie, Malta half marathon 1992 - lock up your daughters.

Personal bests

5k: 15.52; 10K: 32.43; Half Marathon: 70.50 - all when I was a boy; Marathon: 2.46.37 - when I was an older boy

Most memorable/favourite race:

London Marathon (apart from getting to the start line) and any race that the Metro boys and girls do well in.

Most uplifting running experience:

Seeing the finish line of a marathon.

Most depressing running experience:

I once ran the the dyce 1/2 marathon with a hangover after a bet with Chris Hall and Ian Mathieson that we would do it after a night out. Next morning Chris phoned to say he was too ill to run (i.e. he heard that Fraser Clyne running). I'm now too old to drink the night before a race.

Funniest running experience:

Going out a long training run in Malta with the Metro boys, getting lost at the wrong side of the island and getting stuck half way down a cliff face - funny now but not at the time.

Any other interests:

I like watching most sports on tv and the odd pint of beer.

Any advice for a new runner/member?:

Try to train with someone else once or twice a week who's at your level or slightly quicker and you will soon notice a big improvement in your running rather than running on your own all the time. The main thing is to enjoy it and remember that being a fine Metro athlete means you are fitter than 99% of the population.

Any regrets?:

I'm just glad to be running again, apart from moaning about the same old aches and pains we all have from time to time.

Meet the Girlies

Name:

Lynne Parkinson

Age:

31

Occupation:

Research Scientist

**How long have you been running and what triggered your interest?:**

About 4 years. Started when, on a whim, I decided to enter the Stonehaven half marathon to help raise money for a family friend in need.

Why did you join Metro and how long have you been a member of the club?:

Joined Metro just over 3 years ago to help me on my way to the 2005 London marathon which, after my whimsical Stonehaven half, sounded like a good idea.

What's the best thing about being a member of Metro?:

Definitely the company! Those long (and often cold) Saturday morning runs just wouldn't be the same without a laugh along the way and a post run cup of tea at the Westhill hotel.

Any secrets/scandals/embarrassing stories about any fellow club member/s?:

Emm yes but then it wouldn't be a secret! ;-)

Personal bests

3k: 11:42; 10K: 42:12; 10mile: 69mins; Half Marathon: 1:32; Marathon: 3:25

Most memorable/favourite race:

There's been a few. The Pitlochry 10k 2006 is definitely among those high on the list of most memorable. It was my mums first ever race and we finished just outside the hour. Even managed a wee sprint finish taking us past a group of 20 something year old girls. I was so proud!! Cape Wrath Challenge '07 is also up there. Marion, Michelle, Ingrid, Susan and myself all travelled up to Durness to take part in the 5 person marathon relay. It was a great weekend away with the girls and we met some lovely people. To top it all off we won

Most depressing running experience:

Hmmm, that'd be the 2007 Lochaber marathon... I started out at a very enthusiastic pace for the first 10 miles, at which point I realised I could be about to beat my half marathon PB and that it might be a good idea to slow down. Either that or risk not making it as far as the next water station. After realising the error of my ways it seemed to be going not too badly and the miles passed with reasonable regularity. That is until around mile 21 when I started to feel light headed and a little unusual shall we say. Amidst battling with delirium, out of nowhere I was nailed to the spot by what at first felt like a pulled muscle but I soon realised was a serious attack of cramp. First in one calf then both followed shortly by my hipflexors, quads and feet. I was paralysed from the waist down. Not funny! Standing at the side of the road eating a banana with my mum massaging one leg and husband the other while watching scores of people passing me was not how I'd envisaged the end to this day. From then on the miles seemed to stop passing altogether and I was literally walking - as soon as I ran my legs would protest and cramp again. I would have kicked myself for my own stupidity early on, except I could barely lift my legs off the ground! What had felt like a near certainty not so long ago was now feeling about as likely as flying to the moon! I did eventually make it to the finish line. Feeling pretty miffed at the whole ordeal and desperate to redeem myself my immediate knee jerk reaction was to enter myself into October 07's Lochness marathon.... better luck next time.

Funniest running experience:

Possibly being massaged by my mum and husband in the Lochaber marathon!

Any other interests:

Currently trying to get into road biking but I keep getting stuck in my cleats.

Any advice for a new runner/member?:

Yeah, in a marathon situation don't take off faster than you'd run a 10k. It'll not be so much fun come mile 21.

Any regrets?:

Not really. I could say starting too quickly in far too many races but its' all a learning curve and at the end of the day its' just for fun. If it ever stops being fun, it should just stop all together.

Stormont Cross Country

17 November 2007

Colin Youngson - Still life in the old dog?

During the presentation in the Grand Ballroom of the Europa Hotel, Belfast, the announcer called forward the oldest finisher in that afternoon's 'British and Irish Masters Cross Country International' races at Stormont – an 85-year-old man. Just about all the 400 people present – mainly runners – stood and applauded. A sprightly fellow threaded his way through the tables to receive his tribute from local icon Mary Peters. We were, we hoped, applauding our own future. No matter which age-group we were in (from 35 to 70 plus, male or female) we had all watched older runners who were still going as strongly as they possibly could. That fighting spirit was one we all wished to emulate - until the sport really did give us up.

I was glad to be there. After a couple of years of chronic calf injuries, my fitness had declined drastically. However an attempt at modifying my dire running 'style' plus a refusal to over-stretch, had given me six months to build up to jogging and then even a bit of semi-decent running. With my sixtieth birthday coming up, I wondered if I could squeeze into the Scottish vets team once more. Luckily I managed to do so, after a trial race in Glasgow.

This really is a splendid annual occasion and was particularly well-organised this time by the Northern Irish association. Events started on time: the open race; the women's international race (plus M65 and M70); the M50-M60; and the fast 'boys' M35-M45. The course was fast and fair and reasonably flat; and occasional muddy bits were sticky rather than slippery. Even the rain was light.

After the usual nervous preparations we were away. My own efforts were sadly typical nowadays: left at the start; pulling through; and then fading again. Only eleventh out of twenty in my age group but third Scottish counter, and my team finished second to England but in front of Northern Ireland, Wales and Eire. It was a relief at least to get a silver medal. Respectability. And it was good to know I had now managed to represent Scotland not only as a senior, but also in five different veteran categories (four of them as a Metro Aberdeen member).

Scottish stars included George Sim and the other M55 lads, who defeated the Auld Enemy to win team gold. However even they were outshone when the brilliant Bobby Quinn, newly M40, ran right away from everyone, including M35 men, to be the fastest of us all.

Afterwards we caught the free bus back to the city centre, had a quick shower, and almost sprinted across the road to enjoy the delights of Northern Ireland's finest heritage pub, the Crown Liquor Saloon. A great evening followed. Shame about the Scotland-Italy football result, however.

My experience of this event has been like a summary of my whole running career. I have been a winner, a medallist, a team counter, a non-counter, a drop-out and a non-selection. Highs and lows. All part of the game. Think yourself lucky.

One of the best bits was meeting a new Aberdeen running star. Les Nicol is from Torry, took up running a few years ago, has no intention of retiring from his work and is now 71 years young. In Belfast he finished 4th M70 (1st Scot), faster than many younger athletes. His team won silver too and his enthusiasm is inspirational. After I collected my medal, another Scot remarked, "Life in the old dog yet," to which I replied that I wished my owner would take me for longer walks. I confess that I am that owner and must train further and faster or get injured trying!



Charlie's Corner

This section is for quotes and stories dedicated to the North East running scene's legendary oracle of wit and wisdom - Charlie Noble. This editions "words of wisdom" were submitted by Peter Jennings.

As some of you may know, Charlie took part in a **24 hour** road race earlier this year. A few weeks before the event Peter was speaking to Charlie at a local race, the conversation went something like this:

Peter: "So Charlie, how long do you think this race will take you then?"

Charlie: "fit?, eh, mmmm..... eh ??????"



Picture shamelessly stolen from the Fraserburgh RC website

Running Around the UK & Ireland

John Lenehan

I was in Aberdeen at Christmas for my now-customary trip up to Lossiemouth for the Turkey Trot – my 5th in a row. I knew I wasn't really that fit and so couldn't really complain with second place. Then it was off home to N.Ireland for a few days over Christmas – I had decided to travel by bus and boat since the previous time I was in Aberdeen, I had left a guitar with a friend, and I had to get it home somehow and didn't want to risk putting it on a bloody RyanAir plane. After a long trip, I got back and after Santa sorted me out, it was back to uni for a busy term.

I spent a weekend training in the Peak District with the uni running club in January – I drove a minibus up there in terrible weather. We did some tough sessions including a seriously steep hill rep session (makes Grandholme seem easy), and a mad, mad 2.5 hour run across mountains in pissing rain. (It was actually good fun but you'd have to be a runner to understand!) We also had some good craic, I had my guitar and we had a big sing-song.

The week after that, the uni team was running in the third of four Birmingham and District League cross country races, and we were looking well placed to win the second division after reasonable performances in the first two races before Christmas. We had another reasonable performance at this race in Coventry, myself included, and this left us needing to put in one final good performance in the last race in a few weeks time to win the division.

The week after this, it was down to Swansea in Wales, in the minibus again, for the British Universities Cross Country championships. I was disgusted by my performance here, and after the race did some drinking in front of the Wales v England rugby match, my English uni mates couldn't understand my cheering for Wales...All good banter though and a good night including more songs with my guitar!

Seven days later was a big race for the uni team – the final Birmingham League cross country race and a chance to win the division and get promoted to Division One for the first time. I also wanted to put in a good showing after my crap performance the week before in Swansea. So it was off to Gloucester with me at the wheel of the worst minibus you've ever seen (yes, worse than Gavin's Flintstone Wagon!) It did 0-60 in about an hour with more power available from my legs than the engine. It was a sunny and warm day and we had a strong squad, and with a really comprehensive performance, we won the day and the division. I was happier with my performance here, I was the first finisher from our uni. Someone had brought champagne and this was cracked open, we had a good night out when we got back to uni.

I didn't go too mad that night as I was mindful that I had yet another tough cross country coming up in a week – the N.Ireland and Ulster championships, running for the City of Derry – we won it two years ago and were 2nd last year. The venue had changed this year, it was in Antrim instead of Coleraine, and the course was awful. Endless laps of playing fields, not proper cross country at all. I was worried about this race, as I had already been racing every week for a few weeks and just hoped I wouldn't blow up. In the end I didn't, I had a really good scrap with my team-mate and was well inside the top 20. As it happened, we didn't have a strong squad out, but we managed to sneak a team bronze to add to the gold and silver medals from previous years.

The week after that was the English National Cross Country championships, held at Alton Towers... (Don't know how that was going to work, running around log flumes and rollercoasters maybe?!) I told myself, no way, this is too much and didn't run. Particularly since the week after that was the Irish national cross-country championships, to be held in Belfast this year for the first time in a long time, and I wanted to run well there for City of Derry.

So once again, I jumped on a plane and flew back home. This was the worst flight I've ever been on – we landed into a gale force wind (literally) and the plane was bouncing about all over the place (literally) and people were screaming (literally)! The race was held at the same course that staged the World Cross Country Championships nearly ten years ago so I wasn't expecting it to be easy, the rain and wind weren't helping either! Also not helping was the fact that my shoulder was ruined - I had injured it a few days previously when I was knocked off my bike, and it was pretty sore.

Continues over...



John Lenehan and his University running pals continued the age old tradition..... 4 students sharing one pint

....Cont

Our club had entered the B section, with half a chance of a team prize. The race got going and I found it very tough, I wasn't as fast as I had hoped, but hung in there. The shoulder was giving me bother, but the coaches on the sidelines had been doing their sums, and we were in with a shout of a gold medal so it was just a case of hanging on in there. I remember hearing "hang on in there John, there's a big fat gold All-Ireland medal waiting for you", so I hung on as best I could and we got the gold, which was great and the club was delighted with this.

That was the end of the cross-country season. I did one more track race before Easter and also did the uni Pub Jog (with guitar in tow!) I entered the Garioch 10K, with a plan to spend a week or so in Aberdeen, to run the Livingston Relays and 10K in Inverurie. I had also planned to visit friends in Edinburgh and watch the World Cross Country championships, and go hiking on Islay and Jura. I spent the first week of the Easter holidays flying gliders (awesome!) and then, a couple of days before I was due to fly to Scotland, I was on a training run, hit a bump on the grass and went over my ankle. I knew straight away it was bad. It looked awful, badly swollen and mis-shapen, I couldn't walk or put any weight on it and I knew all my plans for Easter were wrecked. Off to hospital I went. The X-ray didn't show any break, so they didn't immobilise it or give me crutches. It turned black and blue and spongy, so here I am with a very bad ankle and I don't know when I'll be running again.

I graduated in June (I can't believe it!) and I'm going travelling for at least a year, so I don't know when I'll next be in Aberdeen. I hope to be back at some stage so until then, thanks for everything, see you soon I hope and keep running (just don't get injured!).



Ali Hughes was furious at not winning the caption competition.... again!!

Heaven & Hell Half Marathon

6 April 2008

John Park

Any race with the word Hell in the title has to be worth a bash so it was with some trepidation that I left Aberdeen on a snowy Sunday morning in April to make the drive to Scone near Perth.

Road conditions were very bad and I considered abandoning my trip at Stonehaven but decided to press on and by Laurencekirk conditions had improved. On my arrival at race registration at Scone Airfield I was relieved to find no snow lying, so got changed, made the necessary pit stops, warmed up and was soon shivering on the start line with approximately 120 or so other runners in bitterly cold and very windy conditions.

We were soon off and running, the first three miles of easy running over completely rural and gently undulating terrain. The first major climb came at about four miles, about four hundred feet of climbing but the gradient wasn't too steep and the summit was soon attained with a fantastic rewarding view of the Tay valley spread before us... this must be the heaven part... hell must surely follow! From the summit there was a very steep, long and winding descent which made for some fast but difficult running, the gradient of the descent making good form difficult.

The route continued through undulating and scenic countryside before, at approximately 8 miles, a hairpin bend delivered us unto hell... about 1000ft and two miles of brutal and relentless climbing. The gradient was continuous and very steep and my previous pace of around 6.20/mile dropped to 9.20/mile or more... 'not nice! On and on and on it went and I concentrated only on getting one foot in front of the other and eventually made it to the top where any hopes of a respite were shattered as there was now a very strong and cold headwind on the 3 mile slog to the finish which included another stretch of steep downhill running.

Back at race HQ there was a great spread laid on by the race organisers, Perth Road Runners, and within an hour results were finalised and prizes were presented. The course record had stood at about 79 minutes, slow for a half marathon, but was obliterated by a young whippet type, Paul Arcari from Kilbrachan AAC who finished in an outstanding 1.13.17 and almost four minutes clear of the second placed runner with the rest of the field trailing by a further six minutes or more. There was no men's team prize awarded as there were no three entrants from any single club so next year all we have to do is turn up and we win! I would thoroughly recommend this race to anyone looking for a challenging race or very hard training workout, but would probably not recommend for a novice wanting to complete their first half marathon. If you go along next year just leave your watch at home as your finishing time will be irrelevant!

Cr@p Caption Competition

For your chance to win BIG (i.e. a £10 Run-4-it voucher), all you have to do is simply come up with a "witty" caption to go with the photograph below.

This month's slightly disturbing picture shows a perfect example of alcohol induced grandad dancing. No doubt Peter will be getting a complex after appearing in two competition pictures in a row.

Have as many attempts as you want and make them as abusive and insulting as you like - Email entries entitled "Metro Cr@p Caption Competition" to rthomson@talktalk.net



Again it was a tough decision to decide on a winner for the last edition, despite begging from certain entrants who shall remain nameless, the winning entry comes from **Keith Varney**, congratulations, the £10 voucher is on its way.



"In 1963, the first shopping trolley seen in Aberdeen causes a lot of excitement and a little confusion"

Thanks to all the other entrants and better luck next time - Here's a selection of others:

Rab put on a happy face, but secretly he had imagined that winning his first race would be more fun than this.

Not many people know that during the 1960's external help to get across the finishing line was still allowed.

"This boy 'George' is off his trolley! ..he's making a run for Marg!"

"Have these guys really grasped the meaning of a trolley dash?!"

The rubbish to be had in the "past its sell by date" section of ASDA was getting worse.

Jennings thought he had got a bargain only to find out the running costs of the vintage model were huge.

Its amazing the worthless tat you can pick up in the supermarket bargain bin.

Definitely not from the organic section

Race Fixtures

If like me (i.e. a wee bit obsessive and anal) you like to plan your races well in advance then here is a list of some local and not so local events taking place over the next few months. If you have a race you would like to be included then please let me know the details on rthomson@talktalk.net

In future I aim to add a section on Metro members race results but for the moment and for more information on these and other races and for full and comprehensive race listings and results service visit www.born2run.co.uk or www.scottishathletics.org.uk

September

- 02 Sep 2008 (Tue) - Krunce Series - 6 of 6. Rotten O'Gairn Car Park
- 06 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Running the Race 10K, Strathclyde Country Park,
- 06 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Ben Nevis Hill Race, Fort William
- 06 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Braemar Gathering Hill Race, Braemar, Aberdeenshire
- 07 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Around Cumbrae 10 Miles Road Race, Isle of Cumbrae
- 07 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Blairgowrie Highland Games Hill Race, Blairgowrie
- 07 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Moray Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K, Elgin
- 07 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Great Scottish Run 10K & Half Marathon, Glasgow
- 10 Sep 2008 (Wed) - Self Transcendence 2 mile race. The Meadows, Edinburgh
- 13 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Golspie 10K, Golspie, Sutherland
- 14 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Deeside Mountain Duathlon. Keiloch car park, by Braemar
- 14 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Robin Hood Marathon, Nottingham, England
- 14 Sep 2008 (Sun) - 5th City of Stirling 10K. Forthbank Leisure Stadium, Stirling
- 14 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Alan Middleton Trust 10K Road, Gordon Park, Ellon
- 20 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Two Ferries Road Race. Treslaig ferry entry, Fort William
- 20 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Big Ben Nevis Middle Distance Triathlon, Fort William
- 20 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Morven Hill Race, by Aboyne
- 21 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Prestonpans Half Marathon, Prestonpans
- 21 Sep 2008 (Sun) - East Neuk 10k, Waid Academy, Anstruther
- 21 Sep 2008 (Sun) - 17th Linlithgow 10K, High Street, Linlithgow
- 21 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Dumfries Half Marathon. Crichton Campus, Dumfries
- 21 Sep 2008 (Sun) - All Body Barrhead 10k Race, Cowan Park, Barrhead
- 21 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Buckie 10K, Buckie Community High School, Buckie
- 27 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Cairn William Hill Race, Monymusk, by Inverurie
- 27 Sep 2008 (Sat) - George Cummings Road Relay, Houston
- 27 Sep 2008 (Sat) - 25th Two Breweries Hill Race, Traquair
- 27 Sep 2008 (Sat) - Cairngorm Adventure Triathlon, Loch Morlich
- 28 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Pitlochry 10K. Atholl Leisure Centre, Pitlochry
- 28 Sep 2008 (Sun) - The Ceres '8' Mile Road Race, Ceres, Fife
- 28 Sep 2008 (Sun) - Dyke 10K Road Race, Dyke, near Forres



October

- 03 Oct 2008 (Fri) - Run 4 It Metro Proms 3k Series - 1 of 6. The Beach Esplanade
- 05 Oct 2008 (Sun) - Bennachie Hill race , Back O' Bennachie, Oyne, nr Inverurie
- 05 Oct 2008 (Sun) - Atlantis Leisure Oban Half Marathon, Oban
- 05 Oct 2008 (Sun) - Baxters Loch Ness Marathon and Festival of Running, Inverness
- 05 Oct 2008 (Sun) - BUPA Great North Run - half marathon, Newcastle,
- 11 Oct 2008 (Sat) - Scottish Athletics East District Cross Country Relays, Prestonpans
- 19 Oct 2008 (Sun) - Jedburgh Half Marathon, Jedburgh
- 19 Oct 2008 (Sun) - The Great Glen Relay, Fort William to Inverness
- 19 Oct 2008 (Sun) - Cardiff Half Marathon, Cardiff, Wales
- 19 Oct 2008 (Sun) - 3rd Aviemore Highland Half-Marathon, Aviemore
- 25 Oct 2008 (Sat) - The Cairngorm Charmer. Coire Cas ski area, by Aviemore
- 26 Oct 2008 (Sun) - Xcite 10K, Craigswood Sports Centre, Livingston

November

- 01 Nov 2008 (Sat) - Stranraer 10K Road Race. Stranraer Academy, Stranraer
- 02 Nov 2008 (Sun) - Dundee Roadrunners 10 Mile Road Race, by Dundee
- 07 Nov 2008 (Fri) - Run 4 It Metro Proms 3k Series - 2 of 6. The Beach Esplanade
- 08 Nov 2008 (Sat) - Glen Clova Half Marathon, Glen Clova Hotel, by Kirriemuir
- 16 Nov 2008 (Sun) - Fraserburgh Half Marathon, James Ramsay Park, Fraserburgh
- 30 Nov 2008 (Sun) - St Andrews Day 6K, Strathclyde Park, Glasgow

December

- 07 Dec 2008 (Sun) - Highland Santa Six, Queens Park Stadium, Inverness