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THE HARRIER

HUNCOTE HARRIERS ATHLETIC CLUB

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Huncote dominant again at Swithland & Hungarton

LRRL Summer League Race 2— Swithland 6 -Sunday 13th June

A very warm day saw this fast race unfold. The leading pack at 2.5 miles included Simon Cotton, Matty Adcock, Ian Murdey and Richard Bromley. Speaking with Simon afterwards, he commented that he pushed a little down the hill at 2.5 miles and no one went with him. Simon is class, but is it not about time, the next generation looked at their own performances and stop giving divine reverence to Simon, Gordon, Steve, Nigel and Gareth.

In the ladies race, Sula triumphed again over Nicki Nealon, but it seemed a closer race this time.

Owls won the team prize on the day for the men, and Beaumont Leys for the ladies, but more importantly Huncote triumphed in the 8 to score LRRL fixture.

The good weather and pre holiday date also brought out another big turnout from the Huncote club, 40 runners taking part. Huncote rivalry also came into play as many Huncote runners came into together as they raced it out with each other. Matty and Craig led the way with a good performance by Steve Copeland to beat Kingsley Cook, and Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski beat a returning to fom Graeme Slight for the first time and just pipped Nicki who has had a heavy raceload in recent times. Fourteen Huncote athletes in the top 100 shows the strength in depth of the club and its great to see this plethora of vests at the finish afterwards. Long may it continue and what about 50 for the Joy Cann!!

Men

1st	Simon Cotton	Owls AC	31:17
2nd	Richard Bromley	Owls AC	32:14
3rd	Mark Powell	Redhill RRt	32:20

Women

1st	Sula Young	BeauntL	35.23
2nd	Nicki Nealon	Huncote	35.50
3rd	Victoria Barber	Charn AC	37.57

Huncote Men

7th	Matty Adcock	33:01
10th	Craig Sabin	34.00
16th	Steve Copeland	34.45
17th	Kingsley Cook	34:55
18th	Mike Bradford	34:59
28th	Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski	35:44
29th	Graeme Slight	35:46
36th	Mike Keenan	36:19
38th	Nick Taylor	36:27
40th	Mick Sandford	36.31
45th	Andy Ball	36:53
66th	Colin Bartlette	38:11
87th	Nick Tomkins	39:20
115th	Steve Wright	40:19
116th	Carl Sommer	40:19
119th	Nick Nealon	40:31
136th	Andy Gorton	41.13
146th	Ivan Balchin	41:34
148th	Mike Tansey	41:41
198th	Keith Chambers	43:53
207th	Mick Butler	44:18
223rd	David Kirby	44:53
226th	Tony Robinson	45:03
258th	Barry Summers	46:05
290th	Ken Earp	47:08
326th	Tony Lay	48:59
410th	Clive Alexander	59:39

Huncote Women

30th	Nicki Nealon	35:50
126th	Annette Nutting	40:45
199th	Jo Copeland	44:02
237th	Jo Ashmore	45:21
259th	Julia Sandford	46:08
295th	Jill Sharpe	47:16
301st	Irene Forty	47:38
306th	Joanna Anderson	47:59
343rd	Martha Slipp	50:34
351st	Christine Newton	51:19
362nd	Katherine Dean	51:48
383rd	Angela Tompkins	53:52
401st	Michelle Wickham	57:18
431	Ran	

LRRL Summer League Race**2—Hungarton 7 –Weds July 7th**

Nigel Stirk looked in great shape on a blustery windy night as he left Simon and Gordon battling for the minor places. In the ladies race, Nicki Nealon was able to force Tara Kryzwicki to retire after setting a blistering pace which the Charnwood runner could not cope with. As a result Nicki got the opportunity to share £500 with Nigel & Simon as she went under 42.30 and the 1st 2 men went under 36.45 for a shared bonus that was on offer from the organisers—that explains why we don't get socks anymore! Huncote also took the Mens team title both on the night and for the LRRL fixture. Again it was good to see a large Huncote contingent, as the club would be unable to win the team events it does without the efforts of people like DK, Barry Summers, Tony Robinson, Tony Lay & Ken Earp. There were also good efforts for the Women on a windy night by Jill Sharpe, Jo Anderson, Martha Slipp, Katherine Dean & Angela Tomkins all great servants of the club.

Men

1st Nigel Stirk Tipton H	36:01
2nd Simon Cotton Owls AC	36:34
3rd Gordon Lee Nuneaton H	37:16
118th Muzzy Izzet	49:03

Women

1st Nicki Nealon	41:50
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Huncote

8th Matty Adcock	39:06
12th Kingsley Cook	40:50
23rd Mick Bradford	42:02
31st Graeme Slight	42:53
33rd Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski	43:00
34th Nick Taylor	43:05
39th Andy Ball	43:39
44th Mark Wittering	44:17
57th Colin Bartlette	45:10
70th Keith Chambers	46:12
71st Nick Tomkins	46:13
98th Martin White	47:55
104th Carl Sommer	48:16
113th Ivan Balchin	48:48
120th Mike Tansey	49:06
132nd Andrew Stevens	49:44
147th John O'Sullivan	50:23
158th Paul Bailey	51:01
185th Dave Kirby	52:42
204th Barry Summers	53:54
217th Tony Robinson	54:31
241st Jill Sharpe	56:27

Huncote

242nd Joanna Anderson	56:34
249th Tony Lay	57:03
258th Martha Slipp	57:41
284th Katherine Dean	59:47
297th Angela Tomkins	61:17
304th Ken Earp	62:05
341ran	

**LRRL Summer League Race
3—Langtons 7.5 –Sunday July
18th**

Good conditions enabled swift times to be run for the Langtons 7.5. A generally quick course with the 1st 2 1/2 miles downhill and just the one tough hill at the end again saw a great turnout by the club and total dominance on an individual front by Simon Cotton and Sula Young. Huncote rivalry again spurred a lot of the club to good performances under these conditions. Steve Copeland had a good race and finished just 4 secs behind Mike Bradford, then again Mike might have finished further ahead as at one point he was literally flying, all thanks to the efforts of Matty Adcock's foot, as he himself was trying to clear his throat following his swallowing of a wasp before the start of the race. Worthy efforts came from Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski (I would say that) who picked up his 1st ever team prize, just holding off a strong finish by Graeme—"God I was looking for the finish line as I ran up the hill!". Good efforts were also put in by Nick Tomkins, Keith Chambers, Steve Wright, John O'Sullivan, Ivan Balchin and Mick Butler. It was also good to see Bernadette Owen out again for the Women's team. Andy Ball also finished highly but had his results missed by the organisers.

Men

1st Simon Cotton Owls AC	39:05
2nd Gordon Lee Nuneaton H	39:50
3rd Garry Payne GES	40:45

Women

1st Sula Young Beaumont Leys	43:49
2nd Nicki Nealon	44:44
3rd Liz Brown Nuneaton H	50:19

Huncote

12th Matty Adcock	43:53
16th Mick Bradford	44:31
17th Steve Copeland	44:35
22nd Nicki Nealon	44:44
24th Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski	44:54
25th Graeme Slight	45:03
32nd Nick Taylor	45:56
Andy Ball	
53rd Nick Tomkins	48:28
68th Keith Chambers	50:08
71st Barry Summers	50:19
78th Steve Wright	50:57
114th John O'Sullivan	54:03
122nd Ivan Balchin	54:40
148th Mick Butler	56:27
175th Barry Summers	58:31
179th Tony Robinson	58:42
186th Joanna Anderson	59:02
191st Dave Kirby	59:12
199th Jill Sharpe	60:14
203rd Tony Lay	60:30
204th Bernadette Owen	60:40
277th Angela Tomkins	74:46

**Barrow Classic 10 Sunday 27th
June**

The Barrow Classic again set a strong challenge to the competitors, but as normal Nicki Nealon and Simon Cotton continued their dominance of the local Road Race scene. Simon seems to be entering everything in the county and winning without too much trouble, though he was challenged on this occasion by Ian Grime. There were also good club efforts by Mike Bradford, Andy Ball, Martin White, Andy Corton, Mick Butler and Barry Summers.

Men

1st Simon Cotton Owls AC	53:52
2nd Ian Grime Newham & Essex	53:56
3rd Chris Southam	58:13

Women

1st Nicki Nealon	62:24
2nd Helen Burrell Redhill RR	63:53
3rd Jacqui Massey Mansfield H	65:11

Huncote

13th Mick Bradford	61:52
17th Nicki Nealon	62:24
26th Andy Ball	65:04
65th Martin White	72:18
75th Andy Corton	73:41
94th Mick Butler	75:44
136th Barry Summers	80:15
264ran	

Club 10km Championships & Handicap Tues 29th June 2004

Congratulations to Matty and Nicki, for retaining their Club Championship Titles. Due to favourable conditions, some good performances were achieved, especially from those who competed in the Barrow '10' on Sunday. From the Handicappers point of view, I had some difficulties with unfamiliar Individuals in terms of current performances. But it's always nice to see new faces who are willing to join in the fun. An exceptional run from Katherine Dean saw her arrive back before the officials were ready, to record the third fastest Ladies time. Unfortunately Kingsley Cook on his debut took the wrong turn and ended up in Huncote.

	Handicap	Time
1	Katherine Dean	55.54
2	Angie Tomkins	57.00
3	Andrew Stevens	57.58
4	Anil Sood	58.11
5	Nick Tomkins	58.12
6	Steve Wright	58.42
7	Mike Bradford	58.56
8	Colin Rimmer	59.05
9	Nicki Nealon	59.15
10	Cathy Astbury	59.24
11	Ivan Balchin	59.30
12	Jeff Wickham	59.44
13	Colin Bartlette	59.55
14	Tony Lay	59.59
	BASE TIME	60.00
15	Graeme Slight	60.12
16	John O'Sullivan	60.18
17	Andy Ball	60.19
18	Carl Sommer	60.22
19	Matty Adcock	60.29
20	Paul Chadwick	60.44
21	Martha Slipp	60.59
22	Gary Clark	61.02
23	Sue Edwards	61.13
24	Paul Bailey	62.15
25	Gill Sharpe	62.21
26	Jon Milner	63.19
27	Andrea Sommer	63.52
28	Sue Dobby	64.09
29	Kingsley Cook	66.35

10KM CHAMPIONSHIP TIME

Men		
1	Matty Adcock	35.09
2	Mike Bradford	36.21
3	Graeme Slight	37.27
4	Andy Ball	38.34
5	Colin Bartlette	38.55
6	Nick Tomkins	39.22
7	Steve Wright	39.52
8	Carl Sommer	40.32
9	Colin Rimmer	40.35
10	Jeff Wickham	41.29
11	Paul Chadwick	42.14
12	Ivan Balchin	42.30
13	Kingsley Cook	42.45
14	John O'Sullivan	43.08
15	Andrew Stevens	44.23
16	Paul Bailey	45.00
17	Anil Sood	45.11
18	Tony Lay	49.29
19	Gary Clark	49.52
20	Jon Milner	50.04

Ladies		
1	Nicki Nealon	37.15
2	Andrea Sommer	49.52
3	Katherine Dean	50.09
4	Gill Sharpe	50.11
5	Sue Edwards	50.28
6	Martha Slipp	50.39
7	Cathy Astbury	52.24
8	Angie Tomkins	53.55
9	Sue Dobby	58.39

East Midlands Grand Prix— Race 5—Weedon 10km— Tuesday 8th June

Following its bank holiday break the East Midlands GP returned with its toughest race the Weedon 10km. A hot humid sunny night (yes we had some this year!) made this years edition even more taxing for the Harriers taking part. This didn't seem to stop Nicki though as she triumphed in another of the series' races. This years old faithfuls Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski and Andy Ball continued in their quests for a decent score in the series and Steve Wright came out for a race before Swithland. Gareth Deacon just beat Steve Platts of the Owls into 2nd place.

Men

1st	Gareth Deacon	Coventry G	33:00
2nd	Steve Platts	Owls AC	33:19
3rd	Colin Deasy	Coventry G	33:34

Women

1st	Nicki Nealon		40:17
2nd	Eleanor Greenfield	Nun H	40:22
3rd	Sally Baker	Grange Farm T	40:40

Huncote

30th	Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski		38:04
50th	Andy Ball		39:55
53rd	Nicki Nealon		40:17
87th	Steve Wright		42:27
313	ran		

Race 6—Banbury 5—Tuesday 15th June

A grey overcast night saw Wlodziu & Colin Rimmer go in search of another score in the race series. D Miles took the mens race for Birchfield in 25:56 by 20 secs and Sue Thompson took the womens easily for Leamington in 28:25, winning by nearly 3 mins.

Huncote

37th	Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski		29:12
92nd	Colin Rimmer		32:35
337	ran		

East Midlands Grand Prix— Race 7—Harbrough 5—Tuesday 22nd June

With warm ups complete the competitors arranged themselves on the grid ready for starters orders. Gareth Deacon is in Pole along side Steve Platts. Red light. Green light, go, go, go. The noise is deafening as we power down the first straight, keep an eye out for non-starters as a shunt early on could spell catastrophe. Down in to 3rd for a sharp left hander, take it easy as the racing rubber is not up to temperature yet. Now it's flat out downhill, competitor's dodging in and out trying to get a clear view of the road. We feel the 'G' force as we go in to the dip and rise up the hill. Message from the pits, it's a very quick first mile. Now we brake hard at Lubenham for a very tight right hander and accelerate out hard. Wlodziu is burning serious rubber while Kingsley is more economical with the revs as the pack stretches out.

Over the canal bridge, right hander then the marshal's yellow flag warning of debris on the track. Easy now, temperature gauge is rising and fuel is depleting. Single file over the second canal bridge then try to pull out the slipstream and power down the straight. Several competitors have blown and safely limp to the side. Hard left then a gentle right curve taken flat out down to Foxton corner. Down a gear before heading down the last fast straight on the course. Competitors start to weave as fuel runs low. Left and then brake hard for the Prison elbow and on down past the grandstands.

It's narrow here, must hold our nerve. There are spectators on the track, this is dangerous. My concentration is broken as Neil Carter Owl's past on the inside. I give chase but no way to pass on the Gartree bends, Neil takes it. I coast over the line and straight in to the pits with a serious misfire and a messy oil leak. (GS)

This time Steve Platts gets the better of Gareth Deacon and Nicki completes her triumph in the Women's overall event with another win. A much stronger Men's turnout including Kingsley enables the club to finish 5th of 11 but only 30 secs shy of a podium finish.

Men

1st Steve Platts	Owls AC	25:19
2nd Gareth Deacon	Coventry G	25:34
3rd S Hazell	Coventry G	25:42

Women

1st Nicki Nealon		30:24
2nd Sally Baker	Grange Farm T	30:52
3rd Susie Tawney	Leam C & AC	32:45

Huncote

23rd Kingsley Cook		28:27
28th Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski		28:52
39th Graeme Slight		29:45
46h Andy Ball		30:12
78th Steve Wright		32:01
83rd Colin Rimmer		32:15
123rd B Nadin		33:56
139th John O'Sullivan		34:31
182nd Tony Robinson		36:43
297ran		

Senior Men's Team

1st Coventry Godiva Harriers	107.55
2nd Rugby & Northants AC	111.04
3rd Milton Keynes AC	116.46
5th Huncote Harriers	117.16
Missed 3rd by 30 secs	
11 Senior Men's teams competed	

Final Grand Prix Standings

Mens Individual

1st Steve Platts Owls AC	5pts
2nd Nathan Holmes Northbrook AC	20pts
3rd Colin Deasy Coventry Godiva	20pts
15th Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski	86pts
87 men scored in at least 3 races	

Vet Mens 40 Individual

1st Brian Summers Rugby/Nhants	5pts
13th Andy Ball	73pts
42nd Steve Wright (3)	66pts
44th John O'Sullivan (3)	93pts
46th Nick Nealon (3)	
111pts 52 vet 40's took part	

Vet Mens 45 Individual

1st Garry Payne GES	5pts
14th Colin Rimmer	86pts

Individual Women

Nicki Nealon won her 3rd overall Grand Prix title in a row and her 5th in 6 years.

Womens Team (3 to score)

1st Rugby & Northants AC	7pts
2nd Milton Keynes AC	14pts
3rd Harborough AC	15pts
17th Huncote	1 race 5pts
24 teams in total	

—its only 5 races to score a and only 6 teams managed it and Rugby, Rockingham & Harbrough are within 30 mins of Leicester— opportunities perhaps for next year for men & Women looking for a couple of quick midweek race sharpeners??

14 Veteran Womens Teams took part

Mens Team (4 to score)

1st Rugby & Northants AC	7pts
2nd Milton Keynes AC	12pts
3rd Wootton RR	17pts
13th Huncote	3 races 23pts
42 teams in total—Huncote finished 10th in Vet Mens and 28 teams took part.	

Nealon Enjoys GB Masters Debut

Nicki Nealon, on her Great Britain Masters debut, gave a superb performance to finish runner-up in the 5000 metres at the Interland meeting at Kortrijk, Belgium. Nicki clocked her 2nd fastest time for the distance of 17 mins 27.41 sec's on a warm but very blustery day. Victory was taken by Loudele Nathalie of Belgium in a very impressive time of 17 mins 12.69 sec's. Third place went to Thevenet Sylvie of France in 17.40.01.

A first 200 metres in 36 sec's following through to 400 in 77 sec's saw Nicki slotting into 3rd position from the 8 athletes. The pace was considerably quicker than Nicki was used to, as it was only her 4th ever track 5000. It therefore took the next couple of laps for her to settle into her stride, by which time Nathalie was away.

At the start of the 4th lap Nicki moved ahead of the French girl into 2nd and started to close the gap on the leader. This situation continued until the 10th lap by which time Nicki had reduced the deficit to 8 sec's, but with 2 laps to go Nathalie again moved away to take a comfortable victory. Nicki finished a clear second missing her p.b. by 7 sec's. considering the conditions this was very pleasing,

Craig Sabin also of Huncote Harriers, offered to double up due to a last minute injury and finished 7th in the 1500 metres in a time of 4 mins 43.83 sec's, behind Handicot Pascal of France (4.08.96). This was followed later in the day by the 5000 metres where he finished 8th in 16 mins 55.76 sec's again behind a Frenchman, Djanti Azzedine in 15 mins 21.40 sec's.

Just Champion

Nicki Nealon had a tremendous weekend, becoming British Masters 5000 metres Champion on Saturday at Alexandra Stadium, Birmingham and following it up with a victory in the Barrow Classic '10' on Sunday.

In wet and windy conditions Nicki secured a British outdoor track title to go with her Indoor 3000m Title won in February. Nicki took a fantastic victory over odds on favourite Sue Ridley of Edinburgh (p.b. 16.51.8). Sue is Scottish Champion and won the British Masters cross-country Title beating Nicki by just under a minute. (There was talk in the crowd of her being an ex-Olympian, but I can't remember)

With conditions being so bad nobody wanted to lead from the gun. So a very slow opening lap of 88 secs saw the whole field stumbling along. Jane Laws then took it on and the next 2 laps went in 85 secs as the field started to break up. Sue Ridley then put in a burst with Nicki moving up onto her shoulder.

With 84 and 85 sec laps, these two had broken clear. The next lap dropped to 87 secs with Sue unsure what to do next and not wanting to lead into the wind.

Nicki sat in for another 200m and when she saw 6 to go set off with vengeance, the next few laps being 81,82,83,82,82 by which time the race was comfortable won. Nicki's final time of 17.28.03 was only 6 tenths slower than hlr Interland time. Sue finished second in 17.55.40 and third was Jane Laws in 18.00.73.

Conditions for Sunday's Barrow Classic were substantially better for running than in the previous years, with a slight breeze and patchy cloud albeit still very warm. Nicki was up against Helen Burrell a fellow Masters Cross-Country International and Last years winner Jacqueline Massey. Helen broke away after 2 miles but on the hill between 3 and 4 she seemed to find it hard going and Nicki pushed on for her quickest time for this tough course.

Don't forget how you can qualify for your awards for the club standards either speak to Dave Kirby or there will be more details in next months newsletter—but keep racing—FAST!!

Huncote Winter & Summer Club Scores

1st	Matt Adcock	225
2nd	Mike Bradford	204
3rd	Kingsley Cook	165
4th	Nick Taylor	162
5th	Andy Ball	150
6th	Wlodziu Kula-Przewanski	137
7th	Mike Keenan	131
8th	Graeme Slight	118
9th	Steve Wright	118
10th	Nick Tomkins	110
11th	Mike Sandford	100
12th	Steve Copeland	93

1st	Nicki Nealon	72
2nd	Jo Ashmore	67
3rd	Bernadette Owen	57
4th	Sandra Stevens	51
5th	Angela Tomkins	48
6th	Jill Sharpe	36
7th	Julia Sandford	29
8th	Jo Copeland	28
9th	Christine Newton	27
10th	Jo Anderson	26
11th	Katherine Dean	23
12th	Annette Nutting	22
Full Results next month		

Tales from the Riverbank or how Mark Wittering spent the Whitsun Bank Holiday

Many 53 year olds would struggle to run 5 miles. Tag another 140 on to that virtually non-stop, and you begin to appreciate the size of the task that Mark Wittering undertook over the that Bank Holiday weekend. Not that his trek from Grantham to London was as straightforward as it might have seemed. He was competing in the annual Grand Union Canal run and, besides suffering from blisters for the 2nd half of his epic, he and the rest of the 70 starters had to run throughout one night along a towpath which at times petered out to almost nothing. "I nearly fell in a couple of times" as "the towpath ranged from concrete to gravel to long grass and there were bits where you had to jump where it just ran out!"

Despite the problems, he completed the 145 miles in 33hrs 45mins to finish a magnificent 3rd out of 70 starters, of whom only 23 finished. For the Harrier, a marathoner with a pb of 2hrs 38mins from 10 years ago, it was his first attempt at the event and his last—(so he said at the time!!)

Depte leading up to the 20 mile mark, he was beaten by another first-timer, Gary Wale who finished just 1hr 9 mins ahead and runner-up Glyn Marston, who was half-an-hour in front. Both, though, had pacemakers all the way—while Mark ran solo for all but six hours during Saturday night when he was joined by Mark Beeby.

The race started at 6am on Saturday with Mr Wittering crossing the line at 3.45pm the following day. There were 9 check-points en route, though he stopped regularly to be fed with bananas, rice puddings and sweets by his support group wife Janet and brother-in-law Paul Wood (who we will hear more from later). A few days later he admitted to still feeling tired and it was simply determination and his "great support team" that had kept him going. He said he thought it was phenomenal that 23 had finished, in 1996 he thought nobody had finished. "That was one of the reasons why, once I'd got past 100 miles, I wanted to finish."

Tales from the Riverbank—(ER! Well Canal Bank!) Part 1 A Runners Tale

What can I say? The alarm went off at 4.00am on Saturday, got to be out by 4.30. Don't eat breakfast so just a couple of cups of tea and out. Arrived at the centre of Birmingham about 5.15, turned into Gas Street to see runners and support crews milling around to register.

It is raining now and I am thinking, do I get out of the car or go home and call it a day? No, I must go and register the fact that I am daft enough to turn up for the start. Chilly now, shorts and long sleeve thermal to start in. Just one question, do I wear or carry my cagoule? Looking at everyone else it goes in my bum bag.

05.55 down a few steps onto the towpath for the pre race pep talk from the organisers. Oh no what's this I hear? It is not now 145.5 miles it has been slightly extended by another ½ mile due to a diversion because of tow path repairs. That's all I need.

Anyhow 06.00am off we go, looking around there must be 60 – 70 of us. Not many carrying anything?? Running at an easy pace contemplating the next 36 hours (the time I want to do) and not nervous but apprehensive. Lots of bridges to cross in Birmingham as we headed out. After a couple of miles the runners had stretched out to the extent that you could not see another runner. I did not expect this so soon.

I had arranged to meet my support crew at 11 miles and then approx every 5 miles at bridges. This is possible because all bridges along the canals are numbered so we all knew which bridge we were aiming for. But what if I arrived before my crew and wanted to carry on? How would they know I had gone through? No problem, I was carrying chalk and would mark the bridge to show I had gone on so they could meet me at the next point.

Anyhow, like I said off we had gone not many runners carrying anything, I wonder why only, to find out later they had arranged for someone to run with them and carry their stuff in teams. 20 miles or so now and beginning to warm up, stopped raining and time to take off my thermal and put on a tee shirt. A cup of tea went down a treat and off I went leaving Janet and Paul to get sorted and shoot off to the next meeting point.

The towpath was beginning to get a bit rougher now, it started with concrete in Birmingham, then gravel, but was now narrower and in places overgrown. Getting warmer, so I change into a vest now. Shrewley and the first tunnel with no foot path through means a climb over the hill and a bit of relief from the flat running, Just a short climb of about 100 feet or so and a ¼ mile before getting back to the canal. That was nice! Long Itchington now and the EXTRA bit, a map was handed to me showing me the route off the canal and back. A short road section and then long wet grass through a couple of fields before dropping back onto the towpath.(Nasty).

Making good progress and keeping an eye on instructions to cross the right bridges because the towpath alternates from side to side and turning the right way where different canals meet. At this time I am in 2nd place and wow! I can see the runner in front. Thinking just keep him in sight and cruise along. Eyes on towpath but I'm feeling a bit rough now and looking up discover he's gone. Here's a junction turning left and running about 100yds realised something wrong. Back to instructions, yes I had turned the wrong way. Would you believe it you can actually get lost on a canal towpath?

Turning around and thinking 'stupid' must keep aware.

Having started in Birmingham, running through Solihull and Leamington Spa (without even knowing) because you can't see much whilst on the canal (lots of water) and at about 40 miles I am running with the leader when we come to the second tunnel at Braunston which meant another climb over the top and after listening to my running partner (who did it last year) decided it was best to walk this one. A bit more climb, than the first over the top and down, where Janet and Paul were waiting to feed me. Stopping here, the leader carried on breaking away from me.

On my own again, through Weedon with a few thoughts of the "Weedon 10k"(nice race). 65 miles approx now and the 3rd tunnel at Blisworth and no support crew? Wait a couple of minutes, chalk the wall and off up the road to see the crew fly by in the car only to see brake lights, before reversing back. Nearly missed. I'm not stopping now, a long road section uphill and down to next point. Suddenly my son pulls alongside in his car only to have his mate Ally jump out and start running with me. He said he would come and cheer me on but I did not expect this. This lad must be mad!, jeans and tee shirt not knowing how far he has to run. 1 mile later and the next point. Time for a drink and off again this time with Ally alongside in shorts and trainers, a welcome bit of company. It's 6 mile section before losing Ally and be on my own again.

Horror! Whilst refreshing another runner passes me putting me into 3rd place now. So off I go in pursuit but my feet are becoming sore now, a sure sign that blisters are on their way. Through Milton Keynes to Bletchley and sure enough.... blisters. Time to dress them. Bought compede plasters to do this, but they would not stick because my feet were water logged. Had to use ordinary plasters, not very good but at least some relief.

Its dark now and my feet are very sore approaching Leighton Buzzard where I was to meet Mark Beeby. I had a bad patch here, as it took ages and my feet are killing me but glad to see the crew at Tesco 90 miles with Mark waiting for me. Time to start taking ibuprofen to ease the pain. Looking great Beeby said, just what I wanted to hear. Fresh plasters and socks and off we set, myself and Beeby with Jason and Ally, this time

on mountain bikes. Fantastic to have some company again. Gave Beeby the instructions to read for me as we made our way through the night, torches aglow. Good section here, (it's the company) but beginning to tire coming up to 100 miles. Feet still sore and changing plasters and

Its time to start slowing down even beginning to walk and run. I expected to be slow through the night so not too bothered.

3 a.m. brings the next meeting point and feet are very sore so change shoes. Great news here as 1st place runner has dropped out making me second. Jason and Ally call it a night here and go home. As it gets light I go through a real bad patch but Beeby pulling me along sees me through it. Seeing Janet at the next point she knew that something was wrong (I looked rough). She knew that I had not eaten for such a long time and made me eat. Mince and new potatoes forced down.

Oh no! while eating another runner comes by, an American woman who was second last year. She too has blisters, so we give her some plasters and off she goes into the distance.

On the move again and getting some stick from Beeby about letting a woman beat me but there's nothing I can do about it.

6a.m. now and Beeby must leave, my crew has to take him back to his car. We decide I must take a mobile so that they can find me when they get back.

Under the M25 now and I knew that I was nearing London. They seemed to be gone for ages and the Ibuprofen had worn off when they got back. This was my lowest point, feet killing me and tears in my eyes, I said to Janet that I could not go on. After a cup of tea, ibuprofen, a cuddle from Jan and a lot of encouragement off I went, well I only had about 30 miles to go.

A good spell now and the good news is I can see the woman in front thinking I can't let a woman beat me (sorry girls it's a man thing). Passing by we chat for a while giving each other encouragement.

Uxbridge and the most amusing part of the race was when we became entangled in a local 10k race with runners passing me whilst I was walking and the back of the field patting me on the back and saying come on not far now thinking that we were running the 10k. That tickled me.

Last official check point now and only 12 miles left, tried to eat some jelly babies but I couldn't as my mouth was so dry. On again to see Janet once more at 6 miles from the finish only to have the 3rd man overtake with two buddies running alongside. The last 6 miles were hard, walking at least 4 of these. Finishing in 33.40 hrs I was inside my time and pleased I was just 1 hr behind the winner and ½ hr for the second, I had slowed to 3 miles per hour in the latter stages of the race.

A handshake and a well done from the organisers followed by another cup of tea and my vow of never again.

Well a month on, blisters healed and thinking that with the right support like the others had, i.e. runners alongside all the way, whereas I ran mostly alone, I might have another go next year and aim for 30hrs. (Now I know that I must be mad). So if anyone would like a gentle jog of a few miles or even 145.5 miles, I would very much appreciate the help, bearing in mind that it is May Bank Holiday.

Mark

Tales from the Riverbank—(ER! Well Canal Bank!) Part 2—From the Other Side

It was a damp 4.00a.m Saturday morning and Mark was waking me up with a cup of tea saying "I told you to come to bed early!" Paul (my brother and co crew member), myself and Mark got into the car and off we went to Birmingham for the start of the Birmingham to London Grand Union Canal race.

There were a few people wandering around at this ungodly hour waiting for these silly so and so's to start. Six o'clock and off they went running down the side of the canal. We went back to the car in the rain to look at our maps. With a road map and a canal map we sorted out where to go to the first meeting point. On arrival the main race support crew was setting up their stall. It wasn't raining now, but was still early, we stood waiting for our runner to arrive. At first, it was just drinks he wanted, but as the day went on it was food as well. I had the camping cooker in the back of the car and was making cups of tea at every stop and food, some of which I had to ram down his throat because he didn't really want it but needed it.

After stopping at every bridge en route as Mark had requested the hours ran into each other. A break of some sort came when Jason my son and his mate Ally turned up. They met up with Mark about a mile before a checkpoint and Ally, who had never run in his life, jumped out of their car and started to run with our man. At the checkpoint, Ally said that he would run the next leg - not knowing that it was 6 miles. Ally changed into his pumps and shorts and off they went. Luckily the next stop was near a pub and having a drink and using a proper loo was heaven. Mark arrived and in close pursuit was Ally completely knackered. Jason and Ally left us vowing to return later with their mountain bikes.

We fed and watered Mark and he changed his clothes and off he went again. Mark, by this time, was getting to be known by the other support crews as "The Man in the Different T Shirt" as every time we met up with them again he had changed his top.

At 11:00 pm we arrived at Tesco in Leighton Buzzard where we had arranged to meet Mark Beeby (Beebs) from the running club. Beebs had intended to run with Mark for a couple of hours but heroically stayed and helped Mark through the night. We waited for ages for Mark to arrive as he'd had a bad stage, but was pleased to see Beebs. It was now gone midnight when they set off again.

The lads and their partners came back with their bikes which they were going to ride in front of the runners to light the way. Paul and I were beginning to tire but we couldn't stop, so off we went with Vicky and Marie in tow. It's not easy finding bridges in the dark but we were doing well and I think we only missed 2. Considering the distance between each varied from 2 to 6.5 miles, we weren't doing too bad. The lamp battery on one of the bikes failed and it was lucky they all didn't end up in the canal!

In the middle of the night we arrived at another check point at a pub, but unfortunately it was closed. I was trying to warm some rice pudding for Mark when I came over all light headed and started talking to myself - Vicky thought I had lost the plot! It's funny what a lack of sleep does to you. I knew how I felt, but it must have been worse for Paul as he was doing all the driving. Morning came and after sorting Mark out, we set off back to Leighton Buzzard to take Beebs back to his car. When we got back to Mark, he was staggering all over the place, so we sat him down, plastered his blisters, fed and watered him and set him off again after threatening to leave him at the side of the canal if he even thought of giving up!

We managed to get a bit in front of Mark and thinking I had time for a bit of sleep I had just shut my eyes when Paul tapped on the window and said he thought he saw Mark coming. Out of the car I jumped, drinks, jelly babies and Skittles in hand and went up to the canal. Alas it was a false alarm. Losing the plot completely, I thought it was mid afternoon but it was only 9.15am.

Knowing Mark still had at least another marathon, if not more, to run, I'd had enough but we still had to keep going.

The day was much of a blur, trying to find all these bridges but we were not doing too badly. Mark was down to the last 6 miles and looking very tired but we knew he would not give up now. We were so pleased when the final stage came and we arrived in London. Trying to park was the next task, but we managed to find a spot near Little Venice. Off we went to find the finish which was a bit of an anti climax with just a few people down on the canal.

I was so pleased when Mark arrived, he was totally done in and so were we. He was presented with his medal and we took a few minutes to find out how the other finishers were (there were just 2 that beat Mark). We then got into the car and with Paul still driving set off back for home.

Mark had run 146 miles but I think we must have driven about 300. It was an experience we will all never forget till the next time.

Janet Wittering and Paul Wood, Mark Wittering's Birmingham to London Grand Union Canal race crew.

Keep abreast of all things Running and Athletic at David Kirby's website on WWW.SimpleRunning.Net—'The Midlands Top Online Magazine for Running and Coaching.

Recent updates include all the winter race results and it has regular updates on races and he'll even do your coaching for you!!! Don't forget to keep up to date with the clubs information on our own Huncote Harriers website.

Men's Team Captain

For information on races please contact the Men's Team Captain Mike Tansey on 0116 2753425 or by e-mail at: Michael.tansey@uk.royalsun.com

Women's Team Captain

For information on races please contact the Women's Team Captain Clive Alexander on 0116 2883054

FIXTURES

Contact Details in Runners World or www.runnersworld.co.uk Check times & details with organisers to avoid disappointment

August

Sunday 8th **Leicester Round** **All Day**
Come out and get behind the club runners, we have 3 teams taking part this year, a Men's team who will try to win the title for a 3rd year in a row, a Women's team and a Mixed team. So if you are not running or supporting, come out and give the club a cheer

Saturday 21st **Race the Train**
See the Huncote Harriers website for details

Friday 27th **Autumnal 5** War Memorial Park Coventry **7pm**
Ann Kirkham, Za-myanco, washbrook Lane, Allesley, Coventry, CV5 9FH, £6, E/D £7
A quick 5 miler round a park in Coventry that could be a possible PB course if you're in shape.

September

Sunday 5th **John Fraser 10 Miles LRRL (OWLS)** Countesthorpe **Morning**
Michael Stiff, 40 Cranesbill Rd, Hamilton, Leicester £6, E/D £8

Saturday 11th **Alliance & Leicester 5km series** **Afternoon**
See the Huncote Harriers website or noticeboard for details. A series of 5km races round the A & L head office in Narborough, well organised and an opportunity to race round a venue that you all train on regularly in the Winter—so how fast can you really go there!!!

Sunday 12th **Experian Robin Hood Marathon & Half Marathon** **9.30**
The East Midlands biggest Marathon and one of the biggest in the UK, not a bad course to chase a PB on.
Events Dept, Sweatshop, Railshead Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 7XA
www.robinhoodmarathon.co.uk

Sunday 19th **Chris Ingram Memorial 10km** Stapleford Park, Nr Melton Mowbray **11am**
J Stares, 4 Tweed Drive, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 0UZ
There is also a 5.3k Fun Run, £5, E/D £6

October

Saturday 2nd **Midlands Cross Country Relay Championships** **TBC**
Brooksby College, Melton Mowbray—Wreake Runners

Bradgate Park Sunday Long Run

Club members meet at the Newtown Linford end of Bradgate Park at 9.30 every Sunday if no race is on. All standards welcome, Clive takes Ladies and those out for a shorter slower run. Graeme & Nicki tend to go between 10 and 15 miles.