



# ON THE START LINE

A Month Of Meltham AC Racing

June 2015

## Clouds, Cows and Comfort Breaks



With it being a local race, the racing Gods decided to throw something extra into the mix for the Marsden 10 with all seasons in one day. Standing by the start line it was clear that the Nab was deep in cloud and there was no chance of it clearing before we'd be up there, despite the fact that the temperature was going to be an issue for keeping hydrated over the first part of the uphill course.

With 14 Meltham runners on show it was a great turnout and the colours stood out amongst the pack as we flew off the line, through the tunnel and towards the turnoff from the road to the track. James Young took a commanding position in the leading 5 runners whilst Jeff Miller was disconcerted to find himself amongst the top ten as he took a perfect line, before being caught by faster runners after the roundabout. Behind him, a group of runners

including Steve Perren and Graeme Lee, also wondered what he was doing, whilst everyone else settled in to a groove for the long climb that is the first half of the race. Deer Hill Reservoir saw Steve take a place as Jeff stopped for an unscheduled 'comfort break' and everyone was surprised to see a herd of cows as we headed towards Wessenden Head Road, but thankfully they were well behaved under the command of Graham and Wendy Sykes, who cheered everyone through a leg sapping part of the course. Wessenden Head Road was akin to a Stephen King story as we disappeared into the mist, which made it seem much longer than usual before the descent was finally undertaken. The mist lifted and the green and purple became a target as members started challenging for position amongst each other and many swift looks over the shoulder were made as the downhill speedsters started catching the hardened climbers, whose leads were being tested to the limit.

First home was James in a fantastic 6<sup>th</sup> place overall, with Steve Perren holding club second. Graeme then led a flurry of finishers with Jeff, Martin and Sarah Brewer finishing within a minute of each other; Mark Cope and Robin Stewart not far behind. Sarah was a full 10 minutes ahead of the next Lady finisher – Alice Buttle, working through a lengthy comeback from injury, with Susan Sheehan, Gilly Markham, Steph Bailey and Rachel Tomlinson following in. Martin Sturdy continued his comeback, coming in ahead of Simon Edwards, who was more of a pacer than a runner on this occasion (See Despatches).

**Results:** 6th 1.07.34 James Young; 21st 1.18.50 Steve Perren; 30th 1.21.47 Graeme Lee; 37th 1.23.04 Jeff Miller; 38th 1.23.11 Martin Bayliss; 40th 1.23.45 - Sarah Brewer; 43rd 1.24.24 Mark Cope; 46th 1.25.41 Robin Stewart; 68th 1.33.59 - Alice Buttle; 81st 1.37.28 - Susan Sheehan; 86th 1.38.22 - Gilly Markham; 88th 1.40.07 - Steph Bailey; 96th 1.42.54 - Rachel Tomlinson; 106th 1.48.23 - Martin Sturdy; 113th 1.53.03 - Simon Edwards



## A Windy Half at Wharfedale

Two years ago it was hot, last year it was storms, this year wind; the Wharfedale Half Marathon never fails to offer up some variety! Being an exposed course over hard conditions, including the dreaded Mastiles Road climb, a headwind can devastate even the strongest runner. Ray McArthur was first home on a course he knows well, whilst Gilly Markham was again taking maximum points. Robin Stewart battled with Andy Lang for most of the race before Andy pulled away to finish a couple of minutes ahead.

**Results:** Ray McArthur 2.04.40 (141st); Andy Lang 2.14.12 (204th); Robin Stewart 2.16.40 (227th); Gilly Markham 2.25.07 (285th); Fiona McArthur 2.40.10

## Faster Than A Finishing Announcer

The weather may have been unsettled, but there was no stopping Andy Whitworth as he not only took his second set of maximum points in this years Road Championship, but outclassed the opposition and won the race outright by a country mile! 20 seconds ahead of second place, he was not only out of sight down the long road finish, but even beat the official announcer who wasn't even ready on the podium when Andy adopted the wide armed pose of the marketing around him—footage can be found on YouTube—well worth a look...

Mark Cope showed his road running class by finishing in 32nd overall whilst Sarah Brewer took maximum points in a month where she really laid a marker on her intention to take this years' Championship—39th place and 3rd Lady overall. Ruth Thomas scored her first Championship points of the year in 77th and Gilly Markham crossed the line in 100th place.

Sharon Whitworth was a couple of minutes back in 115th and Andy Potter was out again this month with a 137th position, coming home under the hour.

**Results**—Andy Whitworth 36.42 (1st); Mark Cope 44.37 (32nd); Sarah Brewer 46.22 (39th); Ruth Thomas 51.20 (77th); Gilly Markham 54.11 (100th); Sharon Whitworth 56.35 (115th); Andy Potter 58.49 (137th)



## Horses, Runners and Raving Loonies

Llanwrtyd Wells (pronounced "clan-ooer-tid" for all not familiar with Welsh) is a curious place. Set in the heart of mid-Wales, it claims to be the smallest town in the UK and that would, you think, make it a nice quiet place to visit. But, you'd be wrong. Nice, yes, but there is so much that happens in Llanwrtyd Wells that it is difficult to keep up. It is the home of the World Alternative Games (incorporating wife carrying races, chariot racing, bath tub racing, Pooh sticks and rock paper scissors, among many other), as well as the World Bog Snorkelling Championships and the Man versus Horse Marathon.

Starting as a bet between a patron and a landlord over whether a runner could beat a horse over a long distance across the surrounding hills, the Man versus Horse Marathon is now in its 36th year; the first runner having only ever beaten the horse on two occasions. This year, a whopping 54 horses, 141 relay teams and 370 individual runners took on the gruelling, hilly and muddy 21-mile course, including Susi and I wearing the Green and Purple. This was our third visit as runners (once previously in a relay and once as individual runners), not to mention that Susi had taken on the course on horseback a number of years back. There was light rain at the start line beside the Neuadd Arms (that's "nayarth"), former headquarters of the Monster Raving Loony Party, which persisted through the day, but the temperature was very nice for running. Last year, a rather unfortunate incident which resulted in Susi and me tending to an exhausted horse after just 7 miles, put us 45 minutes behind schedule and alone at the back of the field and made for a very difficult race. This year, things went a lot more smoothly, though we did stop to help a downed runner, who we later found out had broken his ankle. The course was a couple of miles shorter than last year at 21 miles, but just as hard (21.3 miles with 3859 ft of ascent) and while I was concerned that a favourite break-neck descent had been eliminated, it had been suitably replaced, and a couple of sections that were low points last year had actually been removed, making for a much more enjoyable day.

After a tough course of muddy hilly forestry tracks, the final half mile is brilliant: you can hear and smell the finish line, but you first need to navigate the boggy final path (go high was the tip this year) and cross the river (only knee deep this year!). Feeling strong, we splashed through the river resulting in my calf cramping up. I stretched it out and massaged it and managed to half-hobble the last 300 yards to the finish line, where the beer tent, the old ladies making sarnies and the ice-cream van were waiting.

The horse won again, with Geoff Allen riding Leo coming in in 2:20:46. First male runner was Hugh Aggleton in 2:30:35 and female runner was Lucie Custance in 2:44:55, while Susi and I finished in 4:34:40 beating a few of the back-running horses. All in all, it's a great race that I would heartily recommend. (Thanks to David Sadler for the write up)



## Week 17

Four sunny summer Parkrun Saturdays saw Meltham runners far and wide as the good weather encouraged tourist exploring, with some fantastic results to bring back. Two increasingly popular runs are at Oakwell Hall and Stamford (Stalybridge), offering good challenging courses that offer something different to Huddersfield – why not check them out and see what it's all about!

Tom Whitworth was most improved in June with two PB runs, getting his best down to 21.30; with Rob Matthews getting closer to the 20 minute barrier with a best of 20.19. Andrew Potter knocked a massive 1.41 off his best time with a 28.04, just 5 seconds away from extra time points.

Emma and Simon have stretched their lead, but will both hit the attendance point ceiling before the end of August at the rate they are racing, so will become targets as they will only extend points by increasing times on previous runs – is this the time for Mark Cope, Graeme Lee or the returning Tony Daniels to strike?

Over half the year remains, plenty of time for all...

### Top 5 After 17 Parkruns

1. Emma Burke
2. Simon Edwards
3. Sharon Whitworth
4. Paul Gandy
5. Mark Cope

### Fastest PR Times This Year

Men — 17.14 James Young  
Women — 19.31 Emma Burke



## KING OF THE HILL #3 TRUNCE #4

A massive turnout for Trunce #4 in what can only be described as appalling conditions: cold, wet and overall a bit miserable. But Meltham AC are a hardy lot and Martin Bayliss even chose it as his debut. A titanic struggle at the front saw Paul Elliott sprinting David Sadler to the finish line, pipping him by just a second, as Graeme Lee followed through less than a minute later. Martin was not far behind, recording an impressive debut of 34.05, a full minute ahead of Jeff Miller, who finally ran out of steam having run 5 races in 8 days. Robin Stewart was next home with Mark Crowe taking a minute off his best and the whole group cheered home Rachel Tomlinson before dashing off to cars, towels and heaters.

Just the two results from the King of the Hill in June – Mark Crowe made a debut run recording a 32.40, whilst Sarah Brewer made a cracking debut, smashing the 30 min barrier with a 28.59, claiming the second best time and another 19 points towards her impressive charge to this years' Road and Trail Championship.

### **Results -**

**KoTH** Sarah Brewer 28.59; Mark Crowe 32.40

**Trunce** Paul Elliott 32.41; David Sadler 32.42; Graeme Lee 33.23; Martin Bayliss 34.05; Jeff Miller 35.05; Robin Stewart 36.49; Mark Crowe 37.54; Rachel Tomlinson 47.05

# DESPATCHES

- Simon Edwards took on a major challenge by running a minimum 10k every day for the month of June. Taking in four races, not including Parkruns, he achieved 176th at the Otley 10 mile (1.19.13); 43rd at the Oldham 10k (42.59); 153rd at the Penny Lane 10k (47.52) as well as the Marsden 10. Overall over 205 miles run, completing with the annual club Wessenden Head run in the roasting sun, and, in his words, "...did not fall over once." Congratulations Simon!



- Giles Bailey was back out and racing at Eddie's revenge Fell Race - 15th place in 30.46 for this tricky 3.8 mile race with over 1,000 ft of climb...
- ...and then was out again for the longer Kinder Trog, 16 miles of tough Peak District racing with 3,500 ft of climb—this time 38th place, completing in 2.20.24
- Ally Young took on the 24.5km Round Sheffield race, with its unconventional split section timing (ask Ally...way too confusing). Completing it in 2.07.18, 645th out of 889 runners.
- Pete Dukes went off road for the awesomely named Saddleworth Cross Keys Killer, finishing in 34.43, 24th position for this tough 4 miler.
- Nick Thompson went for another 100 miler—just 6 weeks after completing his first—this time on the South Downs Way. Unfortunately having to pull out at 70 miles you can follow his progress on his fantastic blog—<https://nicktheultrarunner.wordpress.com/>

## WANT ONE OF THESE?



## JULY CHAMPIONSHIP RACES

### **Road and Trail**

1st King of the Hill  
10th Woodland Challenge  
TBC Club Summer Handicap

### **Fell**

13th Trunce 5  
19th Holme Moss

## **Been racing?**

OTSL want to know all about it:  
Email: [jeffmilleruk@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffmilleruk@hotmail.com)

Photos and race reports are both welcomed and encouraged.

Keep training, Keep racing,  
and we'll see you all next month...

...On The Start Line...