

Archive Race Reports 2019

1st January - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain. 9.00am Start

Gary Britnell 24:19, Meg Smith 28:47, Jayne MacArthur 28:48, Fred Smith 28:49 & Kim Ulysses 30:21.

1st Jan - Newark Parkrun Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain. 10.30 Start

Gary Britnell 24:07, Meg Smith 29:36, Fred Smith 29:37 & Al Whitaker 31:29.

5th Jan- Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jack Huxtable: 19:12, Fred Smith: 22:17, Carl Winwood: 23:20 & Meg Smith: 28:44.

6th Jan - Lincolnshire Cross Country Championships Multi-Terrain (if by multi you mean mud and water)

Gary had signed all of the STR ladies up for the senior women's race as he thought that the veteran's race would be shorter, and he thought that we wanted to run further (?!). However, the lady at the starting line seemed to be under the misapprehension that any veterans who were running with the seniors were doing so because they thought that they would have a chance of qualifying for the finals; this was a bit disconcerting and at that point I began to feel even more worried than I already was, and a bit cross with Gary.

Soon after the race started, we got to the first very deep boggy bit. Gary was there with a camera. I saw that Kim was trying to skirt around the outside. However, there was a nice young man there who urged me to go through the middle as that was the shallowest bit. I did. He was wrong. Was Gary involved? I think so. However, having survived mud up to my knees I began to feel a bit better. The worse had happened and it was OK.

The route was designed to go through the deep muddy bog twice and a deep stream six times. Despite dropping further and further behind most of the other runners I actually began to enjoy myself, and the experience of breaking what would be the normal rules of life. I was surprised, however, to see Gary at nearly every stream and bog with a camera as if there was more than one of him! He was clearly hoping for a dramatic fall. I am pleased to say that there wasn't one from any of us.

In the end Sleaford Town Runners acquitted themselves very well as both Polly and Lisa qualified for the championships! Even better our A team (Polly, Lisa and Abi) won first place and our B team Kim, Barbara and (would you believe it) ME were in third place. We all got cloth badges and I stopped feeling cross with Gary for signing us up for the senior ladies as I was very pleased with my badge indeed!

I do not know anybody's finishing times, but those taking part were Gary Britnell, Michal Nizler, Polly Atherton, Lisa Shona, Abi Francesca, Kim Ulysses, Barbara Campbell, Helen Barker and Jane Winter.

12th Jan - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 24:19, Jayne MacArthur: 28:38, Katie Huxtable: 29:29, Jo Calver: 33:32, Helen Barker: 44:53.

12th Jan - Newark Parkrun Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 23:00 & Meg Smith: 29:33.

19th Jan - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jack Huxtable: 19:35, Carl Winwood: 23:58 & Jane Winter: 31:39.

19th Jan - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:40 & Meg Smith: 29:13.

26th Jan - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:40, Jane Winter: 28:30, Meg Smith: 28:35, Kim Ulysses: 28:48 & Jo Calver: 31:53

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

26th Jan - Waterway 30 Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

First of the events in the HoBo Pace race calendar. The Waterways is a Nottinghamshire based rural countryside run taking in the water way tow paths of the Cuckoo Way and Trent Valley Way. The route is 90% trail with some minor roads/tracks along Trent valley way to link the Waterways. Depending on the weather this can be very rough underfoot providing a real challenge. The route is fairly flat and can be a tad uninteresting, this is purely my opinion of course. The 4 well placed aid stations are very well stocked with vegan goodies and various drinks - please note this is a cup less event so you will need to bring your own. The route is very well signed with excellent marshalling and organisation. The route is slightly longer at just over 32 miles. Fortunately, the weather was kind to us this year, but I can imagine how much more difficult this run would be in bad weather, which, in January is highly likely.

There is a strict cut off time of 10.5 hours and upon completion you will receive a nice engraved medal and a technical t-shirt together with some nice hot soup and a roll.

Not sure I would do this event again purely because of the uninteresting route and the high possibility of intolerable weather.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

3rd February - 33rd Charnwood Hills Race (the only fell race in Leicestershire) Multi-terrain. **Organised by** the Bowline Climbing Club.

You know that feeling when you see a race and you know you were just meant to run it? And you can't get it out of your head even though you resolved to enter fewer races and stay local? So, you'll get how I felt when I saw the 33rd Charnwood Hills Race - 14 miles of trail through Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire, some killer hills, only an hour away and not expensive. It was like a divine confluence of woman and race.

Then I saw that you could only run it if you got through a ballot. No problem! I put the date for the ballot in my diary, added the run to my events app, and started looking forward to it - how could I not get in when I was so clearly destined to be there? And in my excitement, I mentioned it to Gary Britnell, out of breath and not thinking straight at the top of a hill during a hill training session. He showed a respectable degree of polite interest, before we turned to run back downhill. Clearly, he did not feel that same connection with this race as I did!

You can imagine my surprise, then, at the news that Gary had entered the ballot. Even better, I thought; not only do I get to run the race, but I get to have some company too. Because why would we not both get through? The alternative was too sad to contemplate! But contemplate it I did, when Gary got through and I didn't. Was he gracious about it? Of course! Was he sorry for me? How could anyone doubt it! Did he offer me chocolate as some kind of compensation? I can't remember - possibly - but I was inconsolable.

But remember, this was my race. So, undeterred, I tried to wheedle my way onto the waiting list, then tried to find a transfer, and finally emailed the organisers and frankly begged. To no avail. But when you want something enough, you will do anything. So, I asked if I could run along with everyone else but without a number. I was there to support a friend, I said. It was public land, they said; they couldn't stop me. Yes! I was in! And because Gary cannot bear to be beaten by a girl, it was good news for him too - now he was going to have the added push of me pursuing him up and down those hills (although everyone knows that I am no real threat - rather, it's the result of a very vivid imagination!)

The day of the race was perfect - why wouldn't it be when so far everything had gone right? The sun was shining, there was no wind and the ground was hard and easy to run on. The route covered public parkland and woods, and so we had the company of dog walkers, parents out with kids on bikes, and families out for their post-brunch stroll. There were two killer hills which reduced me to a walk (at the top of the first there were crowds cheering us on with cow bells and even a set of bongos), as well as some really long slopes - which these hill-starved Lincolnshire runners chewed up like juggernauts! And nothing could beat the views of Leicester in the distance, with its industrial chimneys, with the bright, snow-covered parkland falling away from the top of the hills. And all the way round there were supporters holding out bags of jelly babies and smiling as if they knew us.

I say us - Gary sped off ahead of me and I didn't see him again until the end. So, I can't say whether he stuck to the route or not- all I know is that he was .05 of a mile short of my distance (cutting corners again), went 200 feet higher (did he

climb a tree? Leap up and punch the air with every mile completed?!) and was a good deal muddier! Congratulations are definitely due for Gary's official time of 2:02:24, quicker than hoped, and a place of 122 amongst the men, some of whom looked so gnarled and grizzly it was as if they'd been running trails since birth! My unofficial time was 2:06:44, which I was very happy with.

Coffee and cake were provided free after the race for runners with a number, and although I didn't qualify and Gary's number was in the car, he somehow charmed the nice lady not to charge us. Perhaps it was the big bobble hat that made her relent!

Because the race started and finished in a school hall, we managed to find a nice spot by a radiator to empty the contents of our bags all over the floor and generally fuff about getting changed and moving clothes and valuables from one compartment of the bags to another. This is normal post-run behaviour, right? Which is how I lost my car key. Why wasn't it in my hat where I put it? Out came all the contents of the bag again. It had to be there, just like I had to run this race! And the thought that I'd dropped it in the hall somewhere between the coffee hatch and the nice warm radiator didn't bear thinking about, especially as it wasn't just us who had created their own personal jumble sale on the floor!

While I was trying not to panic, Gary set off in search of my key. He returned triumphant, having again used his charm to persuade a different nice lady, who had found it, that it was mine and that yes, that is a Mazda key even though it didn't say Mazda anywhere. I think you'll agree that the double dose of charm more than made up for taking my place in the race!

Although I knew I would love this race, I had no idea that it would be such an amazing run, and I loved every minute of it and want to go back to do it all again. It was everything I could ask of a trail race. Hopefully next year I'll get through the ballot, but if not, it doesn't matter - it means that some other lucky soul will get to have a go!

Thanks to Lisa Shona for her Report.

9th Feb - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 35:09.

9th Feb - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 29:09.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

10th Feb - Lincolnshire Runner Cross Country Series Race 4.

Sunday the 10th Feb saw the last in the Lincolnshire Runner cross country series, STR were hoping for a great turn out for the last race but there seemed to be a few excuses coming out of the woodwork:

1. Kim had no bobble on her hat so was not going to venture out
2. Andy Barlex had the sniffles and said he was too far away to make the effort
3. Mark Armstrong was having his birthday and did not want to share it with his running buddies
4. Nikki was not allowed out as Mark did not want to be lonely on his birthday
5. Mark Ellis had a proper excuse and was attending a radio interview
6. Barbara had gone for the cross-country classic excuse of a bad back; I think she was actually worried about the depth of some of the puddles.

So that just left Polly, Lisa, Jane and me. Luckily Phil McDonald had shown an interest in joining the club so I messaged him on Saturday night and told him he was in the team, all he had to do was turn up and give me £15, which he agreed to and he was added to the club straight away.

So, with less than 12 hours as a club member Phil was lining up on the start line in his first competitive cross-country race ever, in road trainers and a borrowed STR top, asking if he would be okay in road shoes. Then in my most truthful voice said, 'yes of course you will, there are only a couple of puddles and all the paths are really good under foot'. Then luckily

before Phil could hear me giggling the gun went off and they were running, well splashing actually. The 3 laps were made up of a muddy track that was almost a big muddy puddle all the way round. After the first lap going past the cheering crowds, I could hear Jane and Lisa giggling at the soaking wet, mud covered runners, while taking loads of pictures, I think they were actually shouting encouragement, but I was not sure. By the end of the 3 laps I was exhausted but managed to keep a couple of Striders behind me and finished in 26th place in a time of 38:31, Phil came in, looking a bit dishevelled and shaking his head saying he really did not like Cross Country and would be sticking to road running in the future, in 48th place in a very respectable 48:11 for his first Cross Country race.

Next up was the women's race, Polly was looking serious and was hungry for a win, Lisa was looking semi-serious and was wondering how she could keep her feet fairy dry and then Jane had a big smile on her face wishing she had her wellies on so she could have a good splash in the puddles. Once they were off, they all went straight for the puddles to have a good old splash about like kids, Polly was floating over the puddles and took the lead straight away, Lisa was sticking to the edges as much as she could to avoid getting too wet, although she succumbed eventually and just had a good old splash about with all the other girls and once Jane had gone through a couple of puddles she was loving every minute of it. By the end, Polly came in first place in 24:06, over a minute and a half in front of the second placed lady. Then in 12th place, looking fresh as a Daisy, was Lisa in a great time of 28:10 followed closely by Jane, who seemed to be enjoying the puddles a bit too much, in 33rd place in a time of 35:49.

This was another great turn out by the STR ladies who came equal 6th overall out of 14 teams, easily showing up the STR men's team who came 17th out of 18 teams. This was a great result for STR's return to the Cross-Country league and hopefully will be built on in next year's race series. Out of all the runners from STR there were only 3 that completed 3 events and qualified for the end of season results:

Polly won the Senior Women's competition with her 2 wins and a second place. Lisa came 5th in the Vets Women's competition and I came 21st in the Vets Men's competition.

A great effort by all involved and a big thank you to all that supported the club and entered the races, see you at the end of the year for the next cross-country series.

Thanks to Gary Britnell for his Report.

16th Feb - Belton House Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

463 participants - beautiful spring like morning, Jack Huxtable 19:56, Jayne MacArthur 27:27 & Katie Huxtable 29:56. The course record was broken 14:54 WOW.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for the results.

16th Feb - Newark Parkrun Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Kim Ulysses: 29:51.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Result.

17th Feb - Stamford 30k Lincolnshire, Road.

My 4th time at this well attended event and I have to say the hills are still there! This is a road race which takes you through some very pretty villages surrounding Stamford. Having missed the last couple of years there have been a few changes to the event. One of which being the addition of a medal - about time - this race definitely deserves a medal. You also get a nice technical T-shirt - this year's colour of choice being shocking pink. The other major change was the addition of Portaloos - previous events had used the school facilities - loos, changing rooms etc. Have to say I preferred the latter.

This is a well organised event which sells out - it's a bit like marmite - you will either love it or hate it - I haven't quite made up my mind! No PB for me this year - neither was it my slowest - 3:19 happy with that.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

23rd Feb - Rising Star Parkrun Newcastle, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 48:34.

23rd Feb - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jack Huxtable: 19:22, Kim Ulysses: 26:59 & Katie Huxtable: 29:27.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

23rd Feb - Melton Mowbary Parkrun Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

I, Paul Davidson and Mick Tozer arrived in Melton to have a bash at the parkrun. My first impressions were that everyone was very welcoming and friendly. I decided it would be sensible to arrive early so me and my guide Paul to have a little warm up and get ourselves familiar with the course and its layout. I discovered that there were a few small obstacles to be aware of. After about 150 meters from the start line there was a wooden bridge, that was fairly narrow which also had a couple of corners to negotiate so, we thought that the best way to tackle this, was to actually link arms rather than use the guiding tether. After this, there was a short underpass, followed by a roundabout I'm told - we went around clockwise then a left turn and up a fairly long hill.

After this little warm up then it was back to the start line for the briefing. The run Director for the day was Theresa Coltman who had a lovely personality, very engaging in her delivery despite having a poorly shoulder - Theresa, I really hope that gets better soon! There was a Birthday that was mentioned - it was a chap called David Hall who had actually gone to his marshalling point towards the end of the first lap. Although he wasn't with us, we all sang Happy Birthday with gusto and so loudly he must have heard us. There was much applause and cheering at the end which just had to be done! Theresa also gave out a mention to the tourists - ourselves of course, from Belton and Boston and also to a chap from Newcastle. So, after a few little do's and don'ts that were mentioned, we were chaperoned off to the start line!

Paul Davidson was guiding me - we found that the best thing was to start very near the front of the pack, really to avoid being caught up in the fray as there was the very narrow bridge to negotiate. We managed this without any real difficulties, linking arms as we crossed, then, it was under the underpass, and a left turn, and up the hill for the first time! This certainly was a good old climb. Once we'd reached the top, then it was a right turn and slightly downhill for a while. There was a little narrow gate way that we had to go through, then a series of small left and right turns and a very small bridge, and then in towards the end of the lap with no other hazards really except for a few undulations and tree roots that put me out my stride a bit. Birthday boy David was there marshalling, so, we just couldn't resist shouting out happy birthday to him as we ran passed! Then it was onto the next lap and the finish. I finished in a time of 25 minutes and 12 seconds, which wasn't a bad time considering the nature of the course.

Conclusion. The park run was very well organised, the atmosphere was very welcoming, and Theresa the Run director and all the marshals were fantastic A few things to consider from the prospective of a blind or visually impaired runner and their guide. There is the narrow bridge to think about soon after the start, I'd say that as long as both the guide and visually impaired runner are aware of this, then, this really shouldn't be a problem, then, we have the underpass, the long hill. There are a couple very short left and right turns and another little bridge. Again, make sure that the visually impaired runner and their guide are aware of these before the start.

I would suggest that it'd be a great idea for a blind or visually impaired runner and their guide to do a quick warm up and a bit of a recce of the course before the start. But overall if you bare these things in mind, it's a great course to do, and many thanks again for making myself, Paul Davidson and Mick Tozer feel very welcome!

Thanks to Mark Ellis for his Report.

2nd March - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Kim Ulysses: 26:43 & Lisa Harmon: 43:14.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Result.

2nd Mar - Belvoir Challenge Vale of Belvoir, Leicestershire 15 & 26 miles, Multi-Terrain.

When I first heard about the Belvoir Challenge 26-mile trail race, I had in my mind glowering grey skies, horizontal rain, biting cold, unconquerable slopes that reduced people to a tearful crawl, and a general sense of something that no one in their right mind would sign up for unless they were made of steel and grit. Which I am certainly not!

So, I'm not quite sure how I managed to end up on the entry list! Luckily, I wasn't the only one up for the challenge, as Gary had signed up for the same race as me, and Angie, Alex and Jayne had signed up for the 15-mile option, with Jane managing to get a last-minute place too. At least we would all be cold and miserable together! I watched the weather forecast in the days leading up to the race and could see strong winds predicted. My heart sank a little further.

Arriving at Harby, where the race began, I was cold and apprehensive, and wondered how I was going to get through the race based on all I'd heard. But there was no turning back now. And finding my fellow STRs gathered at the start was a welcome distraction from the nerves.

Setting off, my spirits were lifted almost immediately - you can't beat the feeling of running amongst a crowd of crazies who have the same passion, laughing at some of the outfits (one man was dressed as an American footballer - or was he just very prone to accidents?) and wondering how anyone could have contemplated shorts and vests in this cold. So when I felt Gary tug at my elbow and pull me sharply sideways, I wondered if the jolly japes had started already, only to look down and see I had been narrowly saved from running straight into a bollard at just the right height to scupper any chances of making even a mile or walking for another week! My relief that I hadn't actually run into it, tumbled head over heels and been trampled by the crowds was enough to set me laughing slightly hysterically, and with that began one of the most enjoyable runs I think I have done.

The sun came out and I started to warm up - we had a very long stop waiting to climb over a stile and so there was chance to have a change of clothes and a general reorganisation of bag and baggage. The wait was quite frustrating, and happened at more than one point, but for me, one thing I love about trail running is the obstacles and learning to go with the flow.

The route was characterised by a variety of terrain - grass and tracks, footpaths, stiles and bridges- some of which took us around the Belvoir Estate and through very lovely villages and was really well marked.

There were four checkpoints, each with amply laden tables of sandwiches and cakes, water and squash. As this was a training run and we were experimenting with fuelling, we didn't end up face first in the feasts provided, but instead I tried out jelly babies and liquorice all-sorts (no, too heavy) and biltong (light on the stomach but who wants a beefy after taste for the next six miles?). Gary was chuffed with his little squashed bread, peanut butter and marmite sandwich swirls, which made an appearance at every opportunity - I know, too tempting!

The Belvoir Challenge is pretty hilly (just under 2000 ft of elevation, although not classed as a fell race) and it was well worth getting along to the STR hill-training sessions in preparation (thanks for those, Gary!). There was no other option than to chase Gary to the top of each and arrive smiling - I have my pride! And because there were so many hills, there was plenty of time for quiet contemplation - okay, near-breathlessness when I couldn't formulate a thought, let alone speak! Unfortunately, Gary didn't suffer in the same way, so I had to endure him greeting every sheep we saw with, 'Hello, Dolly!' - and there were a lot of sheep!

I came back into Harby with sore and tired feet, but otherwise elated at how well the run had gone, and it was a lovely surprise to run into the hall to cheers from Jayne, Jane, Angie and Alex. Soup, puddings and drinks were provided - just the job when all I'd had for the last five hours were a few sweets and a couple of strips of dried meat!

This run would have been gruelling in the rain, mud and cold, and I have huge respect for anyone who has done it in those conditions, but it was a joy in the conditions we had, and I would recommend it to anyone who loves trail running. I certainly want to do it again.

As for our results, Gary came 57th out of 182 men and I came 22nd out of 133 women - very encouraging considering we were not racing but using it as an opportunity to experiment with fuelling and pacing, and taking into account toilet stops and a photo break. In fact, we had an altogether leisurely approach - anyone would think we were on holiday!

Just one mystery remains - Garmin recorded Gary as running further than me and higher, and taking less time, even though I went over the finish line first, didn't cut any corners, and even ran back and forward to the toilet to add on some distance. But this just adds to my love of trail running; some things can't be measured - the fact that there is so much to enjoy beyond putting one foot in front of the other, the comedy moments, the camaraderie, the unpredictability, and the wonderful sense of achievement for simply having conquered our little corner of the world.

Thanks to Lisa Shona for her Report.

9th Mar - Belton Parkrun Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Kim Ulysses: 26:50.

9th Mar - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:57.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

10th Mar - Retford Half Marathon Nottinghamshire, Road.

After anticipating wet and windy conditions for the Retford HM it was a pleasant surprise that the weather was less bad than predicted although the course was very wet in some places. The race was organised by Retford Athletic and Running Club. The course was mainly on closed roads starting and finishing at a College on the outskirts of the town centre. With a field of 1300 the race was well attended a well organised.

It was good to see fellow STR runners Fred and Meg Smith at the start. Despite my best intentions to run a steady Marathon pace race just under 1:50, I ended up knocking 2 minutes off my PB. Never thought I could go under 1:40. Final results for STR, Fred Smith 1:38:27, Simon Lunn 1:39:55 & Meg Smith 2:07:55.

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his Report.

16th Mar - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Kim Ulysses: 28:04.

23rd Mar - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: about 30 minutes but no official time as lost finishers token!

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

23rd Mar - SVN Yorkshire Cakethon Sheffield, Multi-Terrain.

A 6-hour challenge on part of the Trans-Pennine Way, Penistone, Sheffield on mostly tarmac and high-quality gravel surfaces.

As always, a very friendly event, loads and I mean loads of cake, a huge and I mean huge medal and a fab goody bag containing the biggest and I mean the biggest bar of chocolate.

These events are among some of the friendliest I have ever done with a diverse range of runners. A particular bonus with this event is the start time of 2pm so no early start. Conditions on the day were good with an out/back distance of 6.6 miles. Happy to say I completed 4 O/B's being Marathon distance and even contemplated an extra O/B but by this time it was getting dark and I still had the 1 1/2 hour drive back in the dark with only my Sat Nav for company! With this in mind I took my medal, goody bag, copious amount of cake and headed home.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

24th Mar - East Hull Harriers 20-mile Hull, East Yorkshire, Road.

On Sunday 24th March I made the trip over the Humber to the East Hull Harriers Club for their annual 20-mile race. It was a warm day, but a little breezy but nice to be out in shorts and vest after all the cold winter miles. The race runs from the Club House over largely rural roads, and tracks to the north east of Hull, the event was well marshalled and there was plenty of support.

I've never run a 20-mile race before and had set a target of under 3 hours, ultimately being slightly surprised to finish in 2:42:30. The goody bag included a microfiber towel, and there was a large homemade buffet at the finish.

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his Report.

30th Mar - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:14.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Result.

30th Mar - Peterborough Parkrun Cambridgeshire, Multi-Terrain.

Found myself in Peterborough on a Saturday morning, so decided to do the Peterborough Parkrun at Ferry Meadows. 675 runners took part on a nice and sunny day, finished in a time of 29:27.

Thanks to Alistair Whitaker for his Report.

30th Mar - Rutland Water Parkrun Leicestershire, Oakham, Tarmac paths.

Well, it was fantastic conditions for Rutland Park run this morning! A fantastic spring day! We arrived around 8.30, and people were starting to turn up. Paul Davidson was guiding me, and a lady called Toni Briggs was guiding Nettie. We could tell from the outset that it was going to be a crowded start. Once the briefing had finished, we were off! Right away it was very difficult to find overtaking opportunities, we would get through one pack of runners, then, almost straight away another pack would be on us. I clicked heels with one or two people, but, despite this, I finished in a time of 23:52 which wasn't bad considering how crowded it actually was.

I would certainly recommend this park run for any visually impaired runner wanting to try park run for the first time. The course is nice and flat, tarmac all the way and it's an out and back course!

Thanks to Mark Ellis for his Report.

31st Mar - Grantham Cup Belton, 10k, trail.

Six (seven? eight?) Sleaford Town Runners and a dog turned up for this event which was held as part of the Belton Horse trials. The race is organised by Grantham Running Club who also run the weekly parkruns at Belton and the popular Summer Solstice 10k so we knew that it would be well organised.

The course incorporated some breath-taking scenery as well as some breath-taking hills! There was an interesting mix of parkland, open countryside and woodland and lots of nature to distract us from the hard work of running up the aforementioned hills (I use the term running very loosely in this case). The weather was bright but very chilly.

One of the advantages of being one of the slowest runners in a group is that there are plenty of team mates to cheer you in at the end which was a lovely end to the race. To top it all there was a very acceptable medal, crisps, sweets and a bottle of beer at the end!

The STR members who took part were Fred Smith: 50:26, Michal Nizler: 52:00, Simon Campbell: 53:52, Mark Armstrong: 1:02:9, Kim Ulysses (and Darcy): 1:03:42, Meg Smith: 1:07:09, Nikki Armstrong, 1:14:50, Jane Winter 1:15:58. Sadly Barbara's injury prevented her from running on this occasion but cheered us on very enthusiastically.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Report.

6th April - Basingstoke Parkrun Hampshire, Multi-Terrain.

Kim Ulysses: 42:11.

6th Apr - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Meg Smith: 28:20 & Fred Smith: 28:20.

6th Apr - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Abi Righini-Brand: 26:47.

7th Apr - Lincoln 10k Lincolnshire, road.

I am afraid that this is going to be a grumpy report, so if you would like to read something more cheerful move on, nothing to see here!

I hadn't planned to sign up for this again after last year as it was expensive and crowded. However, my sister in law and son both said that they wanted to run it with me, so I signed up after all. I was a bit worried that they would both struggle though, as neither of them trained much. I was therefore surprised when my husband took me on one side the week before the race to warn me not to be disheartened if they both beat me due to them both being considerably younger combined with my own recent injury. I reassured him that I would not be upset and anyway, I was confident that there was no way that my son would beat me as he had only been out for one 5k training run a week before the event whereas I am a member of England Athletics and a Sleaford Town Runner to boot!

The start of the race was annoying. There was a bit of a warmup routine that about 20% of the runners actually joined in with (my sister in law and son were clearly embarrassed by my own enthusiastic participation). However, once they got us nicely warmed up they then kept us standing around for five minutes while they talked to us so that we were no longer warm. Then they kept us waiting as there were still a lot of people who were on the wrong side of the barriers and it was hard for them to join us as we were so tightly packed in. Since this was a chip timed event, the people who had not made the same effort to arrive in plenty of time would not actually have been disadvantaged if we had just started and it would actually have made it easier for them to get on the right side of the barrier.

Finally, we started. After a few minutes there was a massive bottleneck where we had to wait for two or three minutes to get going again. Some runners were quite angry and swearing, most were just a bit peeved. I started the race at a steady speed that I knew that I would be able to keep up for 10k. At 2k my son passed me. 'Ah' I thought, 'Rooky error, not pacing himself'. However, I found the race tough going and gradually slowed down, so I never did catch up with him. At 8k my sister in law passed me with a cheery smile and soon disappeared over the horizon along with the 1-hour 5minute pacer who had no business to be ahead of me.

Being a bit further back than last year, the race was less crowded, and the weather was certainly better than last year's heat wave. However, the real highlight for me this year was Meg who placed herself strategically around the course and was able to cheer STRunners on at several key points; what a tonic to see and hear her enthusiastic encouragement; thank you Meg.

The end of the race could not come soon enough for me and I was pleased to see that my sister in law had waited for me just past the finish line. We then had a very slow long walk to get our goody bag and all-important medal. This really was irritating and led to us being very cold. To be fair there were space blankets on offer but at the point that they were offering them we did not know how long they were going to keep us waiting (and they always seem a bit overdramatic for a 10k anyway). After Meg, the second highlight of the morning for me was going back to my brothers to eat post-race hot cross buns.

Sleaford Town Runners taking part were John Lawlor: 43:16, Fred Smith: 44:22, Katie Huxtable: 59:20, Phil McDonald: 59:45, Jane Winter: 1:7:29 and Stan Thornton: 1:11:00 Especially for those of us starting near the back you could take two or three minutes off those times to take account of the bottle neck. I bet Mo Farrah never had to put with anything like that.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

7th Apr - Grantham Sprint Triathlon Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

I, Mick Tozer and Paul Davidson arrived early Sunday morning to take part in the Grantham Sprint Triathlon which took place at the Mears Leisure Centre. The Tandem was duly racked in transition when we arrived, and we then went to register and get our timing chips, numbers and the like before we know it, we were waiting pool side to start the swim, then, we were off.

While I was swimming, I just kept thinking, "don't blast it and run out of air!" Which I managed then it was in to transition 1, or just T1 for short. Putting my helmet on first as you are not allowed to touch the bike without a helmet, then, a jog with the bike to the mount line, then off we went. It was a two-lap course which had a couple of small but steep hills in it around 10 miles in total. Then into T2, the tandem was racked, and the helmet taken off, tether in hand, then we were off on the 5k Run. Mick Tozer was guiding in the swim and the bike and Paul Davidson was guiding on the run.

A fantastic day all round, Amanda Bishop and the team made sure that we had a pool lane to ourselves and, they were all very encouraging and accommodating, we really couldn't have asked for more! Here's the splits for each discipline:

Swim (400m) - 20:03, T1 - 3:55, Bike (16.5k) - 41:06, T2 - 1:13, Run (5k) - 27:25.

Thanks to Mark Ellis for his Report.

13th Apr - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:08 & Jayne MacArthur: 27:18.

13th Apr - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:15.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

14th Apr -Boston Marathon Lincolnshire, Road.

Well, Stuart, who was my guide for the day collected me at around 7.30am. On the way it began to rain, and we thought "oh no!" is this how it was going to be for the race? Fortunately, it eased off. The start was very crowded, but it soon thinned out as the miles ticked by. The nice thing about the race is that it's pretty much flat all the way. The only thing that we battled with was the wind. For the first 10 miles, we were heading right into it, then after then, it varied in stages. I finished in a time of 4:25:25. and more importantly, I managed to raise over £200 for Mid Lincs Citizens Advice, which is a well worthy cause as they provide advice in matters of debt, homelessness, and are more than happy to chat to people that are facing everyday life issues.

Thanks to Mark Ellis for his Report.

14th Apr - Rutland Spring Half Marathon Rutland, mixed terrain.

Rutland has recently begun to host a growing suite of running events including the night-time 10k, an autumn half marathon and this, the second Spring Half Marathon. The events are not the cheapest, but they are extremely well organised and well resourced.

I had signed up for the race because I liked Michal's medal from last year (it had bluebells on it), and also because I thought that the course was flat. After I signed up other club members let me know my mistake. However, Kim only found out that the course was 'undulating' when I told her on the way there; she was not pleased! I was not feeling particularly positive or confident, not only because of the hills but because as I knew that I had not trained enough; I felt like someone who has not done their homework and is about to face the consequences!

Once we had registered, we found the other Town Runners, Michal, Lisa and Gary as well as friend of STR Tracy Parr. The start was very well organised, and we set off in waves every two minutes. These were pre-determined according to our predicted finishing times; each of these started at the exact time advertised which made for a lovely calm start to the race. Funnily enough Lisa had been allocated to the slowest start time (perhaps due to an administrative error). You were not allowed to start before your allocated time but fortunately could start later so both she and Gary set off after Kim and myself, who were both after Michal who was in the first speedy wave. Needless to say, Lisa and Gary overtook us fairly early on. No one who has run with him will be surprised to hear that he passed a comment about us talking too much as he passed! Mind you, he was probably just jealous that we were only going to be running 13 miles as he and Lisa were going to extend their run to 30 miles as part of their training for an ultra, next month!

We got to the first water station after just 1 mile! We didn't bother with that one, but when we stopped for a drink at the second one (at mile 4) we found that there were bananas, crisps, sweets and gels too! There were about five fuelling stations altogether so definitely no complaints in that department! The course was well marshalled and well sign posted so it would be almost impossible to get lost. There was also plenty of beautiful scenery including the reservoir and woodlands full of bluebells, primroses and forget-me-nots. We also saw lots of birds including a great crested grebe, a cormorant, a buzzard and a red kite. I had hoped to see an osprey, but no luck this time!

Despite Gary's comments I was very pleased of Kim's company and conversation which distracted me from the effort my undertrained legs needed to get up those hills! Consequently, the time passed relatively quickly and before we knew it, we could hear the tannoy and knew that we were nearly home. When you ran past the tannoy they actually read out your name and mentioned your club; this made me feel like a champion and gave me the energy for a last minute burst of energy even though my legs had been feeling like jelly for the last couple of miles. Michal was waiting for us at the end

of the race which was so lovely and kind of him as he had finished considerably before us. Kim also could have finished a lot sooner if she had not run most of the course with me. Lisa and Gary had already started a 17mile 'cool down' right around the reservoir so we did not see them, although we did spare them a sympathetic thought!

The medal was attractive, this year we got a daffodil. There was also a very nice t-shirt (black with a daffodil) and a free massage if you could be bothered to queue (I couldn't). There were also lots of cakes.

Our times were Michal Nizler 1:45:44, Gary Britnell 1:59:30, Lisa Shona 1:59:30, Kim Ulysses 2:26:47 and Jane Winter 2:30:37.

20th Apr - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mark Ellis: 37:05.

20th Apr - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 30:24.

20th Apr - Newark Parkrun Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:31.

20th Apr - Peterborough Parkrun Cambridgeshire, Multi-Terrain.

Al Whitaker: 29:25.

27th Apr - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 36:25.

27th Apr - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Abi Righini-Brand: 27:01 & Jane Winter: 31:51.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

28th Apr - London Marathon Road.

After a 15 year wait and never getting through the ballot or winning the club place there were no excuses this year. I had my place (thanks to the club draw) and this time had to train for the London Marathon. 10 years since my last marathon, and rarely running more than a half marathon in December this seemed a bit daunting, but by the end of April having trained to 20 miles I felt ready.

The wait at Blackheath, seemed to take forever, and it was freezing, but the time my start time arrived I was more than ready to get going. I set off and tried to follow the blue line, which was not easy with so many competitors. The atmosphere was fantastic, the whole 26 miles were like the last mile on most races. Despite the crowds I managed to see my family once - they saw me twice, but I was in the zone the 2nd time and didn't see them.

Everything went really well and despite slowing a bit on the last 4 miles I crossed the line in 3:51:54 well inside my target time of under 4 hours.

I've entered the ballot for next year hopefully won't be another 15 years until I get another crack!

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his Report.

28th Apr - The Longhorn Thoresby Park, Ollerton, Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.
Organised by SBR Events

Well organised, fairly local event covering 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, Marathon and 60K Ultra set in private areas of Sherwood Forest and beautiful grounds of Thoresby Park. The route includes a few hills, scenic countryside and forest with mainly firm hard ground. The event also caters for Canicross entries and Nordic Walkers.

The event is well organised with fantastic Marshalls and includes a Race Village with hot food and beverages, free race photography and free post-race massage.

The race was attended by Michal Nizlar who completed the 60k Ultra in a fantastic time of 7:03 whilst me and Helen Barker opted for the Marathon at times of 5:16 and 7:05 respectively.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

4th May - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:00.

5th May - Sleaford Half Marathon Lincolnshire, Mixed-Terrain.

Six Town Runners entered the 2019 Sleaford half marathon. The weather was much better than last year as it was much cooler.

There were plenty of marshals to cheer us on (even if one did tell me that I was in the wrong club). One particularly lovely touch was that several of them had a list with everyone's names and, as we approached, you could see them checking it so that they could cheer us on by name.

I assumed that all other Town Runner were well ahead of me so you can imagine my delight when about three quarters of the way round Sadie caught up with me and we ran together for several miles which certainly helped to keep the spirits up. As ever, Sleaford Striders had done an excellent job, and this was a well organised and enjoyable race all the better for being on our doorstep. Our times were John Lawlor 1:36:50, Paul Kidd 1:46:23, Michal Nizler 1:46:26, Kim Ulysses 2:12:53, Jane Winter 2:23:25, Sadie Kidd 2:23:57.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

11th May - Dukeries 30/40 HoBo Pace Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Have to say this is one of my favourite routes which follows the Robin Hood Way through some absolutely beautiful scenery. The race is well attended and sells out fairly quickly - be warned - if you want to do this race enter early. The Race Director Ronnie Staton is a man who cannot be swayed and no matter how many pleading messages you send him you will not get in if the race sells out!

Race day starts fairly early - 7.30am, there is a 10.5 hour cut off for both the 30 and 40 milers. As previously mentioned, the route is beautiful, the aid stations (vegan) are well stocked and the marshals are fantastic. The route is mainly trail/track - road shoes are perfectly adequate. The weather was far better than expected - almost perfect in fact. There had previously been a couple of days of rain which had resulted in a few muddy puddles but nothing too serious. At the end of the race you are rewarded with hot/cold drinks, yummy soup/rolls, a great T-shirt and a personalised medal.

It was great to see Ronnie doing so well and he was definitely back on form for the race brief! Although he ended with a very poignant speech about his recovery following a stroke on Christmas Eve - not a dry eye in the house.

Finally, I cannot recommend this race enough particularly if you are considering the Robin Hood 100 in September 2020 as the route consists of Dukeries 40 x 2 plus 10 at the start and 10 at the end.

Loved every minute of this race.....except the last 2 miles and to my surprise took nearly an hour of the same run 2 years ago! Sadly, didn't missed last years as it sold out quicker than I thought it would and remember what I said about pleading/groveling messages to Ronnie.....they don't work!

HoBo Pace..... forever on the roam.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

11th May - Peterborough Parkrun Cambridgeshire Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 30:38.

18th May - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire Multi-Terrain.

Andy Barlex: 23:16.

18th May - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:38.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the Results.

18th May - Heartland Parkrun Cornwall, Multi-Terrain.

A holiday to Cornwall would not be complete without a bit of Parkrun tourism. Heartland Parkrun is near Redruth and is the venue of a tin mine museum. Arrived early and had a walk around the park while the volunteers were setting up and realised it was an intricate course with twist and turns including a narrow wooden bridge and adventure playground (to run around, not to play on!)

The course was 3 big laps and 1 small laps.

The Parkrun only gets around 150 participants so felt quite intimate and as they tried to explain the route, let say I was just glad I was not fast enough to lead. Finished in a steady time of 30:51, but another Parkrun location ticked off the list

Thanks to Alistair Whitaker for his Report.

18th May - Newark Parkrun Nottinghamshire Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:04.

18th May - Rutland Water Parkrun Rutland, Multi-Terrain (but nearly all tarmacked).

Kim Ulysses: 27:07 & Jane Winter: 29:37.

25th May - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 21:58.

28th May - Lincoln Wellington Athletics Club 5k series: Race 1

For the first time in several years Town Runner decided to turn out en masse for this event instead of our usual Tuesday night training. It was a great feeling to be in a group of nine runners all wearing our fabulous STR colours.

The evening started with a great deal of trepidation as we drove through an extremely heavy downpour and it did not look as if it was going to be a very enjoyable event at all. However, the very last drop fell just as we were getting out of the car. However, we did learn that an earlier run on the same evening had their results lost due to the deluge!

The route was fast and flat and was three and a half times round a figure of eight track. It was certainly not an easy run as we all were very keen to get our very best possible times. There are three more races in the series over the rest of the summer and the challenge is to see if we can improve our times in later races! This time our times were Gary Britnell with an amazing 20:07, Fred Smith 21:16, Andy Barlex 22:04, Paul Kidd 22:55, Paul Freemantle 23:40, Angie Freemantle 25:15, Charlie Leeson 26:51, Kim Ulysses 27:08 and Jane Winter 29:55.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

1st June - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 26:14, Kim Ulysess: 27:29, Jane Winter: 32:25 & Clare Bergner: 50:39.

1st Jun - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:41.

1st Jun - Newark Parkrun Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mark Ellis: 27:43.

8th Jun - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jo Calver: 34:52.

8th Jun - Great Denham Parkrun Bedford, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 34:46.

8th Jun - Van'Elnor Lincolnshire, trail.

Van'Elnor, which is now in its second year, is one of our most local races; it is just a twenty-minute drive from Sleaford and is closer than our nearest Parkrun! The exotic name is, apparently, a combination of the names of the two organisers.

Seven Sleaford Town Runners turned up for this year despite a less than glorious weather forecast that promised rain and strong winds. Kim and I were less than enthusiastic as we drove through gusty rain on the way there. However, as we arrived the rain eased off and it was merely damp and cold as we queued for our race numbers. Fortunately, as this is still a fairly small-scale event, we were able to huddle in the numbers tent until the very last minute. One improvement that we noticed from last year was that there were three times as many toilet cubicles (last year there were only two which meant that some people missed the start of the race).

The route was slightly different to last year but still included field edges, cinder tracks, grass, woodland, hills and steppingstones! Another change this year was that it was much wetter underfoot and very slippery in places, more than one athlete landed on their bottom! I started off running with Steph and Barbara but by the halfway mark, after stopping to tie a shoelace I lost ground and saw them gradually disappear over the horizon. Fortunately, I was able to run with a Strider for much of the second half which kept my spirits up until they too gathered speed and left me behind. However, as there was less than half a mile to go, I didn't mind too much and it wasn't long before I heard shouts of encouragement from other Sleaford Town Runners and knew that I'd made it to the finish line. By now the wind was really picking up and we were very glad that the race was just finishing rather than just starting. The medal at the end was much better than last year's and there were special doggy treats for Darcy too!

Our times were Michal Nizler 53:38, Simon Campbell 57:35, Kim Ulysses (and Darcy) 1:08:34, Steph Atherton 1:10:57, Barbara Campbell 1:11:39, Jane Winter 1:16:39.

15th Jun - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 26:04.

15th Jun - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 33:03.

15th Jun - Conwy Parkrun Wales, Multi-Terrain.

Charlie Leeson: 28:17.

15th Jun - Gainsborough Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 34:55.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the results.

21st June - Summer Solstice 10k Long Bennington near Grantham, Road.

Organised by Grantham Running Club

I originally suggested running this hugely popular event with Mark as his guide, as it is a road race with good facilities, and I knew there would be other STRs going along so we would have some good company! I also liked the idea of running an event on a Friday night, which is quite a rare thing, and not any Friday night, but the longest in the year, so we would be able to enjoy the long summer evening.

Unfortunately, Mark couldn't make it (he is much in demand!) so I applied for his place (and bottle of ale, engraved glass and medal) and it became a different prospect altogether. Now I was going to have to really race it in my own right. Gary kindly offered to pace me and help me to get a 10k PB, so I tried to make sure I was feeling fresh and ready by the time the day came around.

It was a lovely evening, warm and bright, and the fantastic atmosphere in the race village, and being in the company of other STRs, certainly took away some of the nerves. After a warm-up run, we lined up for what seemed a very long time, before it was time to get going.

I have not been paced before, and it was an interesting experience, trying to keep pace with someone else without knowing how fast I was going, having to slow down when I wanted to go more quickly, and vice versa. It was mentally absorbing, although it was very hard running the last three miles or so. This was when the inner dialogue began: 'I just want to lie down right here in the street!' 'You can't - it's just not an option.' 'I guess this can't go on for ever, can it? I'll either make it to the end or collapse in a heap, throwing up and crying.' 'Just think how good it will feel crossing that finishing line. You won't regret it; you know you won't.' Luckily, there was a lady about my age just ahead of me for the last mile who I wanted to catch up with, so this spurred me on to the end, although she deservedly came in before me.

It was so good to finish, and to know I'd really pushed myself, and also to get my 10k PB. But also great was seeing the other STRs come in and to stay chatting in the evening sun. It was Charlie's last event with us, I think, so we made plans meet up again, same time next year.

Someone told me that this event sells out in minutes. I'm not sure, but if it is one you want to try, sign up early as it is very popular. I would certainly recommend it if you like road races as it is a pretty route (I think - it was all a bit of a blur!) and there is a really upbeat atmosphere. Hopefully there will be another good turnout of STRs next year!

Gary Britnell 44:54, Lisa Hobson 44:54, Andrew Barlex 45:17, Mark Armstrong 50:08, Charlie Leeson 55:02, Nikki Cooper 56:23, Stephanie Atherton 1:05:16 & Jo Calver 1:15:12.

Thanks to Lisa Hobson for her Report.

22nd Jun - Hackney Marshes Parkrun London, Multi-Terrain.

Mark Ellis: 25:27.

25th Jun - Lincoln Wellington Athletics Club 5k series Race 2 Lincolnshire, Track.

Gary Britnell 20:32, Fred Smith: 21:05, Andy Barlex: 22:01, Paul Kid: 22:38, Paul Freemantle: 23:40, Angie Freemantle: 25:17 (3rd in age cat) & Charlie Leeson: 26:30.

29th Jun - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 30:57 & Sadie Kidd: 42:49.

29th Jun - Melton Mowbray Parkrun Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 35:27.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the results.

6th July - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 26:19 & Jane Winter: 29:30.

6th Jul - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 34:12.

13th Jul - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 25:45, Kim Ulysses: 29:35, Jane Winter: 31:44.

13th Jul - Rutland Parkrun Multi-Terrain.

Mark Ellis: 24:18.

20th Jul - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 25:31 & Jane Winter: 31:53.

20th Jul - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 34:43.

27th Jul - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 22:53 & Kim Ulysses: 29:25.

27th Jul - Boston parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 44:40.

27th Jul - Heckington Show 10-mile Lincolnshire, road.

Seven Town Runners took part in the 2019 Heckington Show 10-mile road race, we were also cheered on by Sadie who had signed up to run, but whose leg was in plaster! We had been a bit worried about the weather in the run up to the event as just 48 hours before, the UK had reached the highest ever temperatures recorded and running in that heat would have been unimaginable. Consequently, we were actually relieved when heavy rain was forecast! The forecast did not disappoint, and the entire event was very wet indeed!

The race started with two laps of the racetrack before we set off for Heckington Fen. I actually kept up with Danni at the start of the race and felt great. However, I knew that I would not be able to keep it up for ten miles so when we got to the two-mile mark, I let her slip away, and tried to settle into a slightly slower pace. One of the nice things about this event is that there are times when slower and faster runners are running towards each other; it was so lovely to get the chance to cheer on other town runners when our paths crossed.

Although I couldn't really see anything because of the rain on my glasses I quite enjoyed the first half of the race. I didn't even mind splashing through puddles because my experience with cross country earlier in the year meant that I knew that it would be OK if my shoes and socks got wet! However, between the six and seven mile mark my knee started to hurt in exactly the same way that it did earlier in the year and I began to feel a bit miserable and worried that I was damaging it as I kept on running! I started to get slower and slower and for the last couple of miles had to concentrate on not saying 'ow' every time my left foot struck the road. Moreover, I knew that everyone else in the club had already finished long ago and I started to feel a little bit rubbish.

You can imagine my amazement then when I ran back onto the track for the last little bit of the race to hear all of the other town runners calling my name and encouraging me! For some of them this had meant standing in the rain for over half an hour after their race had finished! Mo Farrah cannot have felt happier or prouder to finish a race as I did then; I sped to the finish line completely forgetting that I even had a sore knee and will never forget that moment. Our times were: Michal Nizler 1:16:44, John Lawlor 1:18:14, Paul Kidd 1:21:33, Andy Barlex 1:22:59, Abi Righni-Brand 1:23:00 (a new PB), Danni Emma 1.36.36 and Jane Winter 1:51:12.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

28th Jul - SVN Gnome Roam Northampton, Multi-Terrain.

A 6-hour Challenge based in Northampton along the River Nene. The 5.17-mile loop is 45% tarmac and 55% grassy trail - complete as many or as few as you like. There are a couple of little add on bits should you require Marathon or Half Marathon distance.

These are very friendly events with a spectacularly large medal and an even more spectacularly large bar of chocolate.

STR's in attendance: Al Whittaker - 2 laps, Shaun Louth - Half Marathon, Jayne MacArthur - Marathon & Caroline Ireson - 1 lap (not a STR but a fan of Gnomes)

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

30th Jul - Lincoln Wellington Athletics Club 5k series Race 3 Lincolnshire, Track.

This series of 4 races, is run on Yarborough athletics track and is well attended by athletes from many local running clubs. The three and a half lap course are more difficult than it looks; although appearing level, there is a long steady incline

which is recouped on a short sharpish decline on one corner. This barely gives you time to recover before you are slogging back up the invisible hill!

However, the series has much to recommend it. Returning to the same track at monthly intervals gives a good incentive to measure one's progress (or not) over a period of time. For the faster runners amongst us there is also the added frisson of being able to run against some excellent athletes from across the county. This can help to squeeze out every last drop of energy in an effort to put on a good performance; this is certainly no parkrun!

However, this should not put off the more sedate runners in the club. The marshals are as enthusiastic in their encouragement for those at the back as they are for those at the front, and I certainly didn't feel out of place. In fact, it was lovely to be part of such an obviously 'sporty' event and to feel that I belonged there as much as the lean and muscly young athletes who were first over the line.

Our times were:

Fred Smith: 20:52, Rob Wing: 22:26, Andy Barlex: 22:37, Michal Nizler: 22:46, Paul Kidd: 23:22, Paul Freemantle: 24:57, Angie Freemantle: 25:42, Kim Ulysses: 26:39, Charlie Leeson: 26:43 & Jane Winter: 30:46

3rd August - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Charlie Leeson 26:26 & Kim Ulysses 27:52.

3rd Aug - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland 35:51.

3rd Aug - Halifax Parkrun Yorkshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter 33:14.

10th Aug - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Meg Smith 31:27 & Jane Winter 35:42.

10th Aug - Penrose Parkrun Cornwall, Multi-Terrain.

Gary Britnell 21:58 & Lisa Shona 22:54.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the results.

11th Aug - Newark Half Marathon Nottinghamshire, Road (and a bit of field)

Six Town Runners entered the 2019 Newark half marathon, we were also supported by Meg who is still recovering from something nasty that happened to her foot last time she ran a half marathon earlier this year (although it was great to see her back at parkrun yesterday).

Since the last couple of weeks has included the hottest day on record, wind strong enough to require severe weather warnings and several episodes of torrential rain we were very lucky that the day started overcast and although windy, nowhere near as strong as it had been the day before. Those of us who were slower also had to contend with some steady rain towards the end of the race, however that was quite refreshing, so not really a problem. The course was mainly on roads that were completely closed and passed through several pretty villages. However, at the end we had to run around a grassy field to get to the finish line. There were one or two hills, but on the whole this course was relatively flat. There were four drink stations although only one had cups, the others had plastic bottles which seemed very wasteful as most people were only having a mouthful of water. However, the marshals were very friendly and supportive and there was also support from random strangers along the course which is always appreciated.

There was a lovely medal and purple t-shirt at the end although they had run out of nuts and bananas by the time Kim, Emma, Lou and I finished! I cannot imagine how this happens as the organisers know how many people have signed up. Could you imagine us telling athletes in the Rauceby Ripper that they had a smaller goody bag because they didn't run fast enough? However, all in all this was a well organised and friendly event. Our times were Fred Smith 1:37:45, Michal Nizler 1:40.01 (a new PB), Kim Ulysses 2:27:22, Jane Winter 2:27:34, Emma Butler 2:38:27, Louise Short 2:38:27.

16th Aug 7pm to 18th Aug 7am - HOTH 6/12/24/36 Hour Event Humber Bridge, Hessle, Road.

One in a series of events involving out/back on the Humber Bridge.

I have done a number of these events in the past which I have always enjoyed as they are very friendly and well organised. However, the weather on the bridge can be very unforgiving, no more so than on Friday night! Despite wearing waterproof clothing which was no match for the gale force winds and driving rain I soon found myself on my 3rd full kit change. It was at that point I thought 'Sod it - I am not spending 36 hours on this bloody bridge! So, whilst I did not complete what I signed up for I did manage 40 miles, 3 full kit changes (not easy in a car) and completion of my 49th Ultra/Marathon.

All in all, the most memorable 12 hours on the bridge to date and as always, a nice T-shirt and medal.

Thanks to Jayne MacArthur for her Report.

17th Aug - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Andy Barlex 28:08, Carl Winwood 24:22, Jane Winter 31:15, Kim Ulysses 31:16, Meg Smith 34:12 & Fred Smith 34:12.

17th Aug - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland 52:43.

17th Aug - Myrtle Parkrun Yorkshire, Multi-Terrain.

Al Whitaker 37:10.

27th Aug - Lincoln Wellington Athletics Club 5k series: Race 4 Lincolnshire, Track.

The temperature all day was incredibly hot and there was not a cloud in the sky. The percentage chance of rain was given at 3% for the time the race was due to start. In fact, one of our number actually cried off as they felt that it would be too hot to run (no prizes for guessing who that was). Most of us took nothing to change into and no extra layers as we would obviously not need them. However, it wouldn't be Wellington 5k series 2019 without a spot of rain and the weather duly obliged for the last race of the season. We were treated to some heavy rain just before the race (as if we weren't sticky enough with sweat already). Luckily, the race itself was dry. However, we drove home through a storm of biblical proportions; the whole sky lit up with very loud and very bright lightening, the wind screen wipers struggled to cope, and the car was in danger of aquaplaning once or twice! We certainly won't forget this event in a hurry.

This time our times were Fred Smith 21:03, Carl Winwood 21:52, Michal Nizler 22:11, Andy Barlex 22:15, Paul Kidd 22:54, Paul Freemantle 24:42, Angie Freemantle 25:55 (3rd in her age category), and Jane Winter 30:11.

31st Aug - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Lisa Shona 21:55 & Carl Winwood 25:33.

31st Aug - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Gary Britnell 20:30.

31st Aug - Melton Mowbray Parkrun Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

(Five parkruns in a day event: this was the last parkrun of the day)

Al Whitaker 45:27 & Jayne MacArthur 45:29.

7th September - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jayne MacArthur: 29:39.

7th Sept - Colwick Parkrun Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Charlie Leeson: 26:11.

7th Sept - Rutland Water Parkrun Rutland, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 29:38 & Kim Ulysses: 29:39.

14th Sept - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Lisa Shona: 21:44, Jane Winter: 30:21 & Sadie Kidd: 38:00.

14th Sept - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Meg Smith: 31: 04.

15th Sept - Ponton Plod Lincolnshire, Trail (12 miles, but there are also 17 and 27 mile options)

I signed up for this race at the last minute because I thought that it would be good training for the Nottingham half in a fortnight. Also, because the Town Runners who had done it last year told me how lovely it was. I was worried when I was sent something called a GPX file and realised that I was somehow supposed to navigate myself around the course. There then followed a period of considerable technological angst and failure which led me turning up armed only with some paper instructions and a sinking heart!

However, I started to feel better as soon as I turned up at Ponton Village Hall which was full of the smell of toast and marmalade and the happy chatter of runners, many of whom had also failed to download the GPX file. Sadly, although everyone that I spoke to assured me that they would be going slowly, careful questioning revealed that their idea of slow equated to my idea of quite speedy, so I had to abandon plans to 'just follow someone else'.

Once the race started, I was soon at the back of the runners (although there were plenty of walkers behind us). After a while I overtook an elderly man who was walking up the hills as I wanted to run the whole way, but apart from that I was the last runner. However, I was very happy as the weather, wildlife and scenery was perfect (apart from a dead adder which had been run over). There were also plenty of arrows, so I didn't need my paper instructions, and I even overtook a couple of Newark Striders; things were looking up.

After about ten miles the challenging terrain began to take its toll and my shoulder became very stiff and painful; I began to slow down and, after a while, the elderly gentleman overtook me and disappeared over the horizon. I wondered if I had walked with him up the hills at the start, I would have finished as quickly as him overall. The last couple of miles seemed very long indeed.....But then I was back in Great Ponton and the soup and custard were just as wonderful as I had been told; there was even a vegan option! I hope that I will be back next year and may even try the 17-mile option if my stamina is improved. The only thing that would have made this race even better would have been some STR company. Not sure of my exact time which was certainly nothing to celebrate but it was about 2 hours and 40 minutes.

21st Sept - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 26:58, Meg Smith: 31:03, Jane Winter: 31:03 & Sadie Kidd: 34:48.

21st Sept - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 35:25.

21st Sept - Conwy Parkrun Wales, Multi-Terrain.

Charlie Leeson: 27:22.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

21st & 22nd Sept - Equinox24 Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

Small Mixed Team 'Better at Running up a Tab': The official results page has Lisa completing five laps and Gary three laps. Not sure if this is correct though as I think he said he did two.

Solo Female: Helen Barker three laps

Solo Male: Michal Nizler ten laps

This is a weekend-long endurance event in the grounds of Belvoir Castle, with options to run solo, in pairs, or as a small or large team. Runners complete 10k laps, as many as they can in the 24 hours, with additional day and night 10k stand-alone races, and a fun run. There is camping, and a race village with plenty of food outlets, a massage tent, and some retail stalls. Around the outside of the race village, clubs and teams set up gazebos and tents with barbecues, fairy lights, beers, music, sofas, and whatever else makes for a cracking weekend away, and it's a god distraction running past them at the end of each lap as you come into the race village again (and again, and again!). I think going in a big group is the best way to do this one - seeing it as a chance to party with the odd trot around the course to do your bit. For me, running it alone was hard going.

Last year I ran the day 10k in preparation to guide the night 10k, although sadly that didn't go to plan, and it wasn't an event I wanted to go back to. Also, I am not a fan of running laps, so when the option of joining the team came up, I was initially unsure about getting involved. However, I decided to be positive and embrace the opportunity - it's about the people, after all. Unfortunately, as the event approached, it started to look as though it would be a team of one - me! Nevertheless, there was a medal and t-shirt waiting for me, and I needed to do a training run anyway, so I thought I would turn up anyway. Luckily, at the last minute, Gary said he would come up and do a midnight stint, which bumped up the number of laps for our very small team.

Now, after two years now of running this event, I still wouldn't want to do it again. I think it's the course. Although the setting is beautiful, there are no parts that I looked forward to from a running point of view, to make up for the tougher sections, and I find that running laps is hard mentally. The course is hilly, with one long, long incline ('Not that hill'), and one short sharp incline ('That hill'), and another grassy hill that doesn't seem to have earned a name ('No, the other hill?').

My first lap was at midday, which I tried to use as a tempo run, and I went back to do four more in the evening, starting in daylight and then running in increasing darkness, as the weather forecast for the next day was dreadful. I remember spending what seemed like a lot of time at the aid station at the top of the long hill, eating protein balls, drinking the energy drink on offer, and faffing around with my pack, trying to adapt to the changing temperature and light.

Helen was there too, valiantly putting in a solo effort, and completing three laps before deciding to call it a day. It was great to see a familiar face, and to know she was out there on the course as well. It was also good to see Michal, who showed his mettle by completing ten laps, also as a solo entrant, with broken feet, which must have been tough both physically and mentally. Well done both of you for what you achieved!

The event is very popular and will be back again next year, together with a sister event called Solstice24 (same idea but 27th -28th June).

Thanks to Lisa Hobson for her Report.

28th Sept - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Paul Kidd: 23:52, Carl Winwood: 25:40 & Sadie Kidd: 48:11.

28th Sept - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 21:46 & Meg Smith 31:33.

29th Sept - Nottingham (Robin Hood) Half Marathon Nottinghamshire, Road.

This year 4 town runners made the trip to Nottingham although only three of us were running, as once again Paul was our back up crew, driver, bag carrier, and all-round good egg. We had a rainy drive to Nottingham, and we began to think that this was going to another wet one (there have been a few of those this year). It was a good job that we had set off in such good time as there was a frustrating time driving around trying to locate the entrance to the car park which had been moved since last year and was not well sign posted. However, this also meant that when Paul eventually parked the car the last raindrop had fallen so we were saved from a pre-race soaking.

We had different coloured bibs according to our predicted finish times. Angie set off in the earlier 'red wave' whereas Kim and I were much nearer the back and set off about ten minutes later in the 'green wave'. Almost as soon as we started the sun came out and, because the roads were so wet, it became quite humid. This is also quite a hilly course so not an easy race by any means. As well as knowing that Angie and Kim were in front of me, I was overtaken by a succession of pacers who left me in no doubt that I was not in line for a good time. On the plus side this course is well supported by lots

of vocal cheerers many of whom call out your name as you pass (due to it being written on your bib). This does make a big difference and helps to keep spirits up.

Nevertheless, I must admit that by the end I had decided that a more appropriate hobby might be stamp collecting. But then I saw the other Town Runners waiting for me on the home straight and life was good again! It was also a relief when both Kim and Angie said that they had found it to be a tough course with too many hot, humid hills! Our times were Angie Freemantle: 1:57:05, Kim Ulysses: 2:22:06, Jane Winter: 2:32:08

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

5th October - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 22:40, Jane Winter: 34:44 & Kim Ulysses: 34:44.

5th Oct - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 21:18 & Meg Smith: 31: 02.

Thanks to Jane Winter for the results.

12th Oct - Gruesome Twosome 10k & Half Marathon Swallow, Lincolnshire, Trail.

To enter these events, you need a partner because you enter as a team of two. We had two Townie teams in the 10k: The Not So Young Offenders (aka Abi and Danni), and Jim and Kane (aka Kim and Jane), We also had a team entered in the half marathon. This was The Freemantle's (aka Angie and Paul). The rules state that teams had to finish together, so there is no point in rushing off and leaving your partner behind as you would just have to wait for them at the end before being allowed over the finish line!

The event starts in Swallow which is good 40 minutes on the other side of Lincoln, so you do need to set off in good time. Fortunately, once you arrive there is plenty of parking a short walk from the field where you can collect your numbers and grab a cup of (indifferent) tea. However, we then found that there was a long walk (probably getting on for half a mile) to the start of the races, which meant that by the time you have returned to the car to drop off your bags (there was no bag drop) and queued for the toilets you could be pushed to get to the start of the race in time, and this was not really made clear in either the signage or pre-race information (The Not So Young Offenders found this out to their cost and arrived as the race began).

The terrain was very challenging; hilly and tussocky. However, the views more than made up for this. The route included field edges, country roads and woodland. We saw buzzards and hares and heard plenty of birdsong. The weather was perfect; sunny but with a gentle cooling breeze. There was a very steep hill at 8k of the 10k race (and just after mile 12 for the half marathoners) which was quite a challenge. (Halfway up was a sign saying 'It's only a hill; get over it!').

At the end there was a cup of dodgy coffee and a rather nice beany which (almost) made up for the lack of medal. Marshals were friendly and helpful and the whole event had a nice atmosphere. This is definitely one that I would consider in the future and would recommend to other Town Runners with the proviso that they make sure that they set off for the start line in plenty of time.

Our times in the 10k were The Not So Young Offenders: 1:3:59 and Jim and Kane: 1:17:34. In the half marathon The Freemantle's came in with a time of 2:15:09.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Report.

13th Oct - The Spires and Steeples Challenge Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

This was the 11th year of this local event which goes from the top of Lincoln, through villages and across fields, ending at the Hub in Sleaford, with an alternative half distance starting in Metheringham. It is open to runners and walkers and follows the way-marked Spires and Steeples trail.

After taking part last year when it was my first marathon, the conditions for which were almost comically wet and muddy, I was wondering what it would be like to run it in better weather. I needn't have bothered - as Ana and I sat chatting on the bus on the way to Lincoln, as it splashed through the rain and puddles before depositing us near the public loos where we met with Ingrid and tried to warm up under the hand-drier, I thought about the only way back (other than stowing

away in the bag-drop van, where we sheltered before the race began). It was going to be another mud-bath! I was quietly pleased - it's surely part of the fun of cross-country!

I think it rained almost all the way, and some parts were truly challenging - you needed to be a pond-skater not to get stuck in some of the muddiest parts. There was one ploughed field which Carl and I ran across like clowns in over-sized shoes with exaggerated high knees, our trainers clogged with newly ploughed wet earth. It was a choice between laughing or feeling defeated, so I went for the first. In other parts, there had been so much rain that the mud had washed away leaving deep puddles that it was easier to go through than try and get around.

It's not an easy run and if you don't like rain and mud, it could be fairly grim. You have to carry your own fuel, so there isn't even the anticipation of cake and sandwiches at the aid stations. I was flagging at 13 miles, so it was great to hear cheering and shouting from the crowd waiting for the start of the half marathon. It turned out to be Paul and Sadie Kidd who had turned out to watch the fun (or walk the dogs?) and I think Jane Winter, and the encouragement was much needed! Also helpful was that Carl and I were running at almost exactly the same pace, so I had some company and support for most of the way.

It was such a sense of achievement to get to the end, and to know that a cup of coffee, hot bath and huge pizza were waiting for me at home! I was also really happy as I had been secretly hoping (and training!) to come in under four hours, which I just managed. I think everyone who even turned out that day deserves a big pat on the back, as it was not inviting, so well done to all the STRs who had a go, runners and walkers alike.

Full - Lisa Hobson 3:56:37, Carl Winwood 3:58:50, Ana Hendrickson 6:17:01

Half - Jayne McArthur 2:35:40, Lilly Warbrick 2:37:44, Louise Short 3:26:57

Half walkers - Jane and Chris Winter 4:26:32

And a special shout-out for Ingrid, who set off feeling poorly, and managed what I think was a heroic 16 or so miles before saying enough was enough.

Thanks to Lisa Hobson for her Report.

19th Oct - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 21:45, Paul Kidd: 22:38, Kim Ulysses: 28:45 & Sadie Kidd: 33:19.

19th Oct - York Parkrun Yorkshire, Tarmac.

Jane Winter: 36:10.

19th Oct - York 10 mile & Marathon Yorkshire, Road.

Since I work in York and love this city very much indeed this seemed like a great opportunity to try out a race a little bit further from home. I'd been working in York on the Friday anyway so I just stayed put and waited for Chris to join me for what turned out to be a lovely weekend; we spent Saturday checking out the parkrun, exploring the city and going on an open topped bus tour (Oh and carb loading, there are lots of lovely eateries in York so basically when I am in York and not working I am always carb loading whether or not I am racing). We stayed in a Travelodge where, at breakfast, I noticed a large group of runners around a table all from the same running club. I would LOVE for Town Runners to go away together like this some time.

Meg and Fred were also signed up for the 10 mile and marathon respectively, so I was looking forward to seeing them at the start. However, although I did see the marathon runners set off, I didn't see Fred; I could not find Meg either in the intervening hour before the 10-mile started. This was because the event was HUGE and there were thousands of people milling about. Next time I will make sure that we agree a rendezvous so that we do not miss each other.

Both routes start off through York itself and past the minster where there are lots of cheering crowds. We then set off into the beautiful countryside where the marathon runners were diverted from the 10-mile course to add an extra 16 miles or so onto their route before joining us again. As well as running through lovely countryside on closed roads we passed streets of houses where people stood outside to wave us on. I was chuffed to actually see a work colleague standing outside her house!

This was my best race for ages, and I felt strong and steady the whole time and, having started at the back, was gradually overtaking people the whole time which felt good. The race ended with a hill, but I did not mind as by then I could smell the finish line and felt strong enough to keep going (even if I couldn't quite manage to speed up). It turned out that I had been just behind Meg the whole time and we met up just past the finish line before going to collect our free pint of (non-alcoholic) beer which was surprisingly refreshing. We then went to wait for Fred to finish the Marathon. We only just got there in time because he knocked so much time off his PB that he was more than ten minutes earlier than expected. He looked as fresh and strong at the end as he does at the end of Thursday club run!

I think that it would be lovely if a whole group of Townies entered these two races next year as they are close enough to relatively convenient but far enough away to feel like an adventure. The race was well organised, and the medal was good, although the event village was a long way from the start. Our times were: in the marathon Fred: 3:28:18 and in the 10-mile Jane: 1:51:05, Meg: 1:51:37.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

27th Oct - Worksop Hallowe'en Half Marathon Nottinghamshire, Road.

This is a great race if you like running somewhere beautiful but like to stay on proper paths as it takes you through the woodland estate of Clumber Park, and because of the time of year, the trees are in full autumnal colour. It's also a really good race for guiding, as the terrain is largely easy to navigate, with the challenge coming from the many long inclines. Mark and I said hello to another guide and guided runner which was a real encouragement. I love the atmosphere, with runners embracing the theme and dressing up. Another plus is that it starts at a secondary school with plenty of loos, a warm hall with chairs and tables and a fabulous coffee and cake bar, a bag drop, music, and a goody bag of food, t-shirt and medal at the end.

This year's event was just as good as I hoped. The weather was fantastic - sunny but not too warm despite the awful weather we'd had beforehand. There were some great costumes - we saw a couple each giving a piggyback to a life-sized skeleton, whose loose jaws clacked and clattered so that they looked as though they were chatting to each other, although sadly one of the skeletons lost a limb somewhere along the way! And no race is complete without something unexpected; in this case it was a big, icy cold puddle which there was no way around. Mark and I just splashed through it and squeaked our way onwards, but I know that it wasn't necessarily everyone's idea of fun.

It was great to see so many STRs come along to join in the seasonal fun, and we were really pleased to have Tracy Parr's company and support too. Well done to everyone for the great running and making it to the finish line (without tripping over the metal ramp, which I nearly did!). Hopefully we will be just as lucky next year with the weather and will all still be running strong!

Andy Barlex 1:42:42, Paul Kidd 1:51:23, Angie Freemantle 1:55:21, Paul Freemantle 1:58:15, Lisa Hobson 2:03:15, Mark Ellis 2:03:15, Jane Winter 2:52:54, Tracey Dufeu 3:19:01 & Helen Barker 3:20:05.

Thanks to Lisa Hobson for her Report.

2nd November - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Michal Nizler: 23:28, Kim Ulysses: 36:06 & Jane Winter: 36:08.

2nd Nov - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 34:48.

3rd Nov - Three Rivers Lincolnshire, Trail and Road.

This is a small-scale local race which Sleaford Town Runners have enjoyed taking part in for several years. You literally run along the River Slea until you get to the Skirth, then you run along the Skirth until you get to the Witham. You then run along the Witham until you reach the Slea again and then you run along the Slea until you get back to your starting point - almost like a 15-mile triangle. However, it's a triangle with muddy paths, tussocky grass and lots of stiles to climb over!

So, although this race is completely flat, it is actually very challenging, and the novelty does start to wear off the stiles after the first few! However, on the plus side the whole race does have a very friendly feel to it and there is soup and cake,

as well as a medal, at the end! I ran with Meg and had a lovely time until the last mile or two when everything really was a bit of a slog. However, as soon as we got back to base, had some soup and saw our fellow town runners we felt great again and will probably sign up to do it again next year!

Our times were Fred in 14th place with an amazing 2:05:58, Angie and Paul Freemantle in joint 40th place with 2:32:05, Jayne in 56th place with 2:50:53 and Jane and Meg in joint 67th place with 3:11:11.

9th Nov - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Michal Nizler: 24:44, Jane Winter: 33:32 & Kim Ulysses: 33:34

9th Nov - Great Denham Parkrun Bedford, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 34:55.

17th Nov - Cross Country match 3 Belton House, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

This was the best turnout yet from Sleaford Town Runners for this cross-country series as there had been a lot of clashes with other races earlier in the season. Moreover, this event was much closer to home. As is usual with cross country, men and women ran in different races and the men's route was longer than the women's. However, we all got to run up the same muddy hill at the start of each lap and splash through the same stream about halfway round!

The cross country races have a completely different feel to the other races that we attend as they are only attended by 'proper' club runners and there are children running in some of the races too so the whole event has a much more 'athletic' feel than the big open road races.

We all acquitted ourselves very well and our positions were: In the men's race (run over 10 km): Nick 43rd, James 59th, Michal 60th and Carl 64th. In the women's race (run over 6 km) Lisa 10th, Lilly 22nd, Kim 36th and Jane 47th.

23rd Nov - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Jane Winter: 35:02.

23rd Nov - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:53 & Meg Smith: 31:40.

23rd Nov - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 35:19.

30th Nov - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:27 (NB: Fred's time is accurate, due to an issue with 'funnel duckers' the later times were actually about 20 seconds slower than these official times) Jane Winter: 29:45, Kim Ulysses: 29:52 & Meg Smith: 30:52.

30th Nov - Clevedon Salthouse Parkrun Somerset, Multi-Terrain.

Polly Atherton: 26:21.

30th Nov - Melton Mowbray Parkrun Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 39:18.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.

7th December - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 25:51, Kim Ulysses: 29:18 & Jane Winter: 33:57.

7th Dec - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 34:49.

14th Dec - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Fred Smith: 22:42, Carl Winwood: 24:42 & Meg Smith: 30:44.

14th and 15th Dec - Maramile Newark, Nottinghamshire, Road.

This is the one where we run round and round an old airfield in bitterly cold wind until we cannot stand it anymore. This year was not quite as biting cold as last year, but the wind was stronger, and it wasn't a walk in the park by any means. The idea is that, as long as you do it within six hours you can choose your distance. 1 lap is 5k, 2 laps 10k, 4 laps a half marathon, 8 laps a full marathon and any more an ultra! What is more you can choose whether to run on the Saturday, on the Sunday or even, for the most fool hardy, on both days!

As usual this event was well attended by Town Runners and the organiser, Adam Holland, commented how much he appreciated our continued support of the event and our habit of setting up our own food station and meeting point. On the Saturday Ingrid, Angie, Paul, Mike, Mark, Michal and Jane ran. Michal returned for more on the Sunday when he was also joined by Jayne.

I was so impressed with the resilience of some of the team who ran many more laps than I did. I found the half marathon quite gruelling enough and the wind was starting to get a lot worse by the time I finished. Our results were: On the Saturday, Angie 4th and 1st lady with 10 laps 6:06:52, Paul 5th, 9 laps, 5:49:48, Ingrid, 7th, 9 laps 6:06:52, Mark 8 laps 5:34:56, Jane 4 laps 2:46:42, Mike 4 laps 2:56:30. On the Saturday Jayne 8 laps and a time of 5:04:38. Michal came first over the two days with an amazing total of 18 laps (9 on each day) and a time of 5:06:14 on the Saturday and 5:35:38 on the Sunday.

21st Dec - Belton Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 25:27, Kim Ulysses: 28:30, Sadie Kidd: 37:30 50th Parkrun, Jane Winter: 37:31 & Paul Kidd: 37:32.

21st Dec - Boston Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Mike Folland: 35:57.

21st Dec - Rutland Parkrun Rutland, Multi-Terrain.

Mark Ellis: 30:00.

25th Dec - Lincoln Parkrun Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Paul Kidd: 24:36, Meg Smith: 31:06, Fred Smith: 31:08 & Sadie Kidd: 36:53.

28th Dec - Hartlepool Parkrun County Durham, Multi-Terrain.

Carl Winwood: 22:58 & Lindsey King 40:01.

Thanks to Jane Winter for her Reports.