



# NEWSLETTER

## September 2024

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## **General Liss Runners information**

Note: the evenings are closing in now. For any running in the dusk or dark please wear Hi-viz clothing with reflective strips or belts. So, car drivers can see lights reflected back into their eyes. Head torches are a good idea but please angle the beam down to the ground, so fellow runners and others are not blinded.

Liss runners website: [liss-runners.org.uk](http://liss-runners.org.uk)



## **Liss Runners Weekly organised activities: -**

**Sunday:** Morning long run (around 10 miles usually on the road): meet up Newman Collard Car park in Liss (what three words: ghosts.firmly.sprayed) at 9am.

**Monday:** In the Summer Pub runs: See page .....

**Tuesday:** "torch" runs: evening trail runs over 5 to 7 mile routes: note: trail shoes are ideally needed and a head torch is a must on dark evenings. Locations change every week with a meeting time of 7.15pm. There is a WhatsAppGroup for the weekly location. It would be great to have a report of the torch runs, at some point from a regular.

**Wednesday:** Interval training session: A number of club members are kind enough to each organise a Wednesday evening training session. Meet up at Newman Collard Pavilion at 7pm or closer to the training location, which is on a club e-mail before Wednesday. All speeds welcome as training is in one place or there are "gather ups". Note: club "handicap" races are held once a month from May to September replacing Wednesday evening training.

**Thursday:** Social runs: Easy paced runs with frequent stops to "gather up". Meet up at 7pm in the Central Car Park, Petersfield near Waitrose (what three words: sugar.bumpy.besott).

**New this year!** There are occasional organised running track sessions down at the Mountbatten Centre, Portsmouth usually on a Sunday evening. Look out for club e-mails or WhatsAppGroup messages for details of further sessions and lift shares from Liss.



Liss Runners Important Club Contacts: -



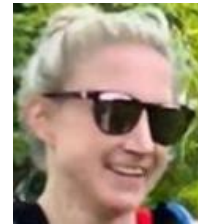
Club Chairperson:  
Catherine Seager



Club Secretary:  
David Reid



Club Treasurer:  
Andrew Turner



Club Ladies Captain:  
Caroline Brown



Club Mens Captain:  
Steve Armstrong



Club Communications officer:  
Jayne Jefferies



Trained club welfare officer:  
John Collis

Club kit officer: Stuart Lalavette  
Club membership officer: Rose Lewis



Sunday run co-ordinator:  
Neil Gwatkin

Club social secretary:  
Alison Strudwick



Wednesday training co-ordinator:  
Helen Purchase



Club newsletter Editor:  
Tom Frost

## Chairperson Comments...

Hi All,

It's been great to welcome lots of new runners to the club over the past few months. The summer hasn't delivered as much sunshine as we might have liked, but the longer days have allowed us to enjoy lots more daylight running at least!

Thanks to the efforts of Tom, Rose, Richard and James and we have had a fantastic season of pub runs/walks with large turnouts for all. If anyone is interested in putting any on next year do let us know, the more volunteers the more we will be able to offer.

The summer also hosts the handicap series for the club. Louise, Alison and Robin have stepped in to oversee the series this year and with one left to go it's again been a well attended and enjoyed set of races. Personally after 5 years of organising I've really appreciated being able to participate again (although I may feel differently for the 30 minutes of pain during each of them)!

The Tuesday torch runs have been particularly popular this year thanks to a handful of regulars organising beautiful routes to enjoy each week. Thursday socials too have been able to get a bit more off road and out of town with the lighter evenings, with the Sky Deer Park and the Hangers featuring.

Jayne has introduced track sessions for club members down at Mountbatten Centre, an extra chance to enjoy/endure some more efforts alongside the usual Wednesday intervals and hill sessions. Talking of which we have several extra trainers that have kindly offered to take our Wednesday nights so expect the return of Killer Kim sessions alongside several others over the coming months.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who came together to put on such a successful event at the Harting 10 mile. The atmosphere every year makes it such a friendly event for runners and their families to enjoy and it's great to be able to showcase the club so positively.

We were able to donate £1100 to the Rosemary Foundation this year which I know was much appreciated.

So here is to the next few months of running, the return of the HRRL league races from September and XC to come from November onwards. Plenty of chances to don the red vests!!

Catherine





## Editors Comments

Well, this my first one and see what you think. Any comments please let me know. On future newsletters some of the pages, such as general information will not change much. Other pages will be for previews and reviews of the race leagues we are in. Any good photographs and race reports gratefully received.

Any club events coming up I'll include along with reviews of past events.

Many thanks for Catherine for the Chairpersons comments with a summary of what's gone on and how the club is doing.

I'm also after any input from club members. If you have got up to or taken part in anything of interest to other club members, e-mail a report and photographs pretty please! Many thanks to Katherine Parker for her report and photographs of her and Warwick's taking part in an ultra race in Finland. Mad people! What senary though!

There is also the Runners Profile sheet: could runners please contact me if you are willing to be featured, please; before I come a badgering!

Anything to go in a future newsletter please e-mail me on: -

[tom.frost@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:tom.frost@westsussex.gov.uk)

I aim to produce the next Liss Runners newsletter in late October/early November.

## Liss Runners Handicap Series

Liss Runners hold a series of six races from 3.6 miles to 5.1 mile distances, around the Liss area on the first Wednesday of the month from April to September. The handicap replaces training that day. The first race doubles up as the club championships, also know as "Trevor's Challenge" in honour of our club founder Trevor Stoddard. This race decides the clubs' ladies and gents champions. It also gives runners their "handicap" times. These times are used to set runners off at different times with the aim of everyone finishing at the same time. Quite an effort for the finish team to take down the results. Many thanks to Louise Beaven and her merry band of helpers on putting on these races so successfully.

Handicap winners are not the fastest runners but are runners who improve the most through the season. Any speed of runner can win. The most points are awarded to the first runner back dropping down as each runner finishes. The best five race results are taken to decide the series winner and series runner placings.

And don't forget, after the last race, there is an organised visit to an Indian restaurant for a curry. What's not to like!

### Handicap Points Table 2024

Name	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Race 6	Total
Steve Armstrong	97	87	91	97	0	0	372
Ellie Bryan	67	99	95	100	0	0	361
Gemma Sills	81	92	89	96	0	0	358
Paul Stokoe	99	88	79	90	0	0	356
Catherine Seager	93	79	88	91	0	0	351
James White	82	80	92	94	0	0	348
Stavros Valourdos	91	81	82	92	0	0	346
Matt Gregory	89	85	90	74	0	0	338
Andy Paton	86	76	93	82	0	0	337
Tom Frost	92	75	74	89	0	0	330
Rose Lewis	57	96	87	87	0	0	327
Gavin Saunders	85	74	76	83	0	0	318
Nicola Thorneycroft	77	77	71	84	0	0	309
Chris Dettmar	100	84	0	95	0	0	279
Rob Nugent	95	0	81	88	0	0	264
Tom White	94	0	73	93	0	0	260
Kevin Durrant	62	95	100	0	0	0	257
Adrian Albury	0	73	78	99	0	0	250
David Brown	90	82	70	0	0	0	242
Cliff Pay	64	72	96	0	0	0	232
Helen Purchase	78	71	0	80	0	0	229
Jacqui Waddell	60	0	80	81	0	0	221
Tom Bennie	0	89	0	98	0	0	187
Ben Tyas	87	0	99	0	0	0	186
Mel Jensen	0	83	97	0	0	0	180
Alex Peck	88	91	0	0	0	0	179
Sarah Page	0	90	85	0	0	0	175
John Collis	96	0	0	75	0	0	171
David Reid	98	0	72	0	0	0	170
Max Stuart	0	93	77	0	0	0	170
Laura Baty	71	98	0	0	0	0	169
Jim Hamilton	66	100	0	0	0	0	166
Hugh Maddison	80	0	0	77	0	0	157
Ian Simpson	72	0	0	85	0	0	157
Emily Durrant	56	0	94	0	0	0	150
Stu Lavalette	63	0	84	0	0	0	147
Michelle Norton-Hughes	61	86	0	0	0	0	147
Sara Rhimes	69	0	75	0	0	0	144
Alex Wilkinson	59	0	0	78	0	0	137
Amy Panther	65	0	69	0	0	0	134
George Waddell	0	0	98	0	0	0	98
Emily White	0	97	0	0	0	0	97
Richard Pedgen	0	94	0	0	0	0	94
Tom Jones	0	0	86	0	0	0	86
Warwick Parker	84	0	0	0	0	0	84
Tom Morris	83	0	0	0	0	0	83
Rob Fleming	0	0	83	0	0	0	83
Jayne Jefferies	79	0	0	0	0	0	79
Toby Clay	0	0	0	79	0	0	79
Maddie Smith	0	78	0	0	0	0	78
Kate Parker	76	0	0	0	0	0	76
Sandra Sellis	75	0	0	0	0	0	75
Naomi (Visitor)	74	0	0	0	0	0	74
Ben Potts	73	0	0	0	0	0	73
Paul Judge	70	0	0	0	0	0	70
Tanya Roberts	68	0	0	0	0	0	68
Dan Findlay	0	0	68	0	0	0	68
Laura Harding	58	0	0	0	0	0	58

Remember: Only the best 5 results from the 6 races count towards your overall score

## Hampshire Road Race League



Liss runners are affiliated to the Hampshire Road Race League. This is a league of 12 road races from September to July. Races are open to all but only club members from affiliated clubs will score in this league.

There is a club league where the fastest four members of a club, taking part, score.

The league is split into four: A, B, C and D and in these there are divisions such as A1, A2 and A3.

Well done to all our Liss Runners who took part last season. Our ladies managed a fantastic 4<sup>th</sup> in the top A1 league and division and our gents had a great 6<sup>th</sup> in the A2 League and division.

There are also placings for Individual runners if they finish at least seven races in a season.

Our runners who took part in seven or more races were: Catherine Seager with a superb 4<sup>th</sup> overall, Steve Armstrong (26<sup>th</sup>), Stavros Valourdos (64<sup>th</sup>), Andy Paton (68<sup>th</sup>), Gav Saunders (76<sup>th</sup>) and Neil Gwatkin (124<sup>th</sup>).

Races for the coming season:-

September 4<sup>th</sup> : Overton 5 mile Road Race.

October 6<sup>th</sup>: Solent Half Marathon Road Race.

October 27<sup>th</sup>: New Forest 10 mile MT race.

November 17<sup>th</sup>: Gosport Half Marathon Road Race.

December 1<sup>st</sup>: Victory 5 mile Road Race.

January 12<sup>th</sup> : Stubbington 10km Road Race.

February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ryde 10 mile road Race.

April 6<sup>th</sup> : Salisbury 10 mile Road Race.

May 12<sup>th</sup>: Alton 10 mile Road Race.

May TBC: Netley 10km race.

June 15<sup>th</sup> : Alresford 10km Road Race.

July TBC: Lordshill 10km Road Race.



To take part in any of these races enter the race in the normal way. Some – like the Stubbington 10km - fill up very fast.

# The Last four HRRL race reviews

## Netley 10k (HRRL)

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The morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of May we all had an early start. The team jumped on the A3 and headed down for the Netley 10k, the 10<sup>th</sup> HRRL race this season.

After a slightly chilly start, the sun slowly came up, as did the mercury. But fortunately most of the race was finished before it got really warm.

Netley 10k consists of 3 laps (roads and paths) within the picturesque grounds of the Royal Victoria Country Park. The course is relatively fast, with a small incline on each lap. The course is on traffic free roads, and marshalled throughout the course, with accurate chip timing.

As usual some strong running from everyone, with a small sprinkling of 10k pbs. First man V60 for Andy Turner, and a First lady V40 for Catherine Seager. Quite an achievement considering this road league course could have been described better as mixed terrain. A very different course from last year.





# Alresford 10k (HRRL)

16<sup>th</sup> June we had a strong squad for the penultimate HRRL for the season at the Alresford 10k.

Set in the market town of Alresford, the route heads through the town, past the famous watercress beds, and into the local countryside. Half of the course is an out and back section. There are hills!

We had a handful of individual wins. Andy Turner was 1<sup>st</sup> V60, Sarah Page came 2<sup>nd</sup> lady overall, and 1<sup>st</sup> in her age category. Then Catherine Seager came 2<sup>nd</sup> in her age category.

We also welcomed a new member, Aido running for us for the first time.



# Lordshill 10k (HRRL)

Lordshill 10k is the last race of the season, it is a fast and flat out-and-back course down quiet country lanes. Perfect for PB chasing.

The weather wasn't fantastic, but could have been a lot worse. We managed to mostly get done in a rain free window. Another fantastic team turnout, and some great performances. No medal, but a lovely glass to remember the run.

Overall the Liss men, after a strong end to the season, finished in 6<sup>th</sup> position in the 2<sup>nd</sup> division. The phenomenal Liss ladies, in their first division, finished 4<sup>th</sup>.

As soon as it's finished the 2024-25 HRRL season will be starting up again in September with the Overton 5.





# Alton 10 (HRRL)

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Liss Runners took on the Alton 10 (HRRL) on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

The race runs through a circuit of undulating countryside and picturesque Hampshire village lanes. A tough course, made tougher with the heat. Fantastic organisation, it has to be said, by Alton Runners.

We definitely all felt it today with the weather, but we produced strong performances. Debut Liss races for Max, Georgina and Joe. Great to have them racing in red.

Liss men took 2<sup>nd</sup> on the day in their league, ladies an incredible 1<sup>st</sup> in theirs.





Liss Runners are also in the [Southern Cross Country League](#). This is a league for currently 24 running clubs in the Eastern area of Hampshire and surrounds. Its aim is to organise cross country races, of a distance around 5 miles, over the October to March period every year by a few of the member clubs with the focus of the ordinary running club member. There are time limits to prevent the very fastest runners from taking part. These are 5 minute 30 seconds a mile pace for the men and 6 minute a mile for the ladies over a 5 mile or more distance.

This is for 5 miles no quicker than 27'30" for the men and 30' for the ladies.

For a 10km distance 34' 11" for the men and 37' 17" for the ladies and

For 10 miles 55 minutes for the men and 60 minutes for the ladies.

Any runners exceeding these times at any time in the year before the first race of the season should not be taking part in any races of the league that season.

Club placings are from the first four best placing runners both ladies and men and then the overall placings are an aggregate of the two. Every runner can affect the team score as they can push other club members further down the results.

Basingstoke won the league last season but Liss were close behind in joint second with Denmead Striders and Alton Runners (our ladies were 2<sup>nd</sup> and our men were 4<sup>th</sup>).

Recommendations for taking part in races in the league: start to introduce some cross country runs into your training, if you are purely a road runner and get some grippy trail or cross-country trainers (not spikes) if you have not got these already. Races routes have slippery, muddy sections not suitable for road or general-purpose trainers.

Current details of races this season: 3<sup>rd</sup> November: Benyon's Enclosure South of Reading, Late November: Bourne Woods South of Farnham, December: Lords Wandsworth College Odiham, January or February: Chawton House Alton, February: Alice Holt and 2<sup>nd</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> March Wickham.

Note: The Alice Holt race is a joint club effort. We have supplied marshals and helpers in the past. So, if able to, please look out for the helper request early in the New Year.

For each race, to reduce the need for parking and save petrol costs, there will be organised met ups for car sharing to the races. Look out for the e-mails for this. We plan to have the club tent for members kit and children at every race.







## **Fancy a race...**

Every Saturday 5km [Parkruns](#) at 9am: local [Parkruns](#): [Hogmoor Bordon](#), [Queen Elizabeth Country Park Petersfield](#), [Alice Holt](#). Note: to be included in the results you need to be registered with Park Run and have a bar code to show at the finish.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September: [Overton 5 mile Road Race](#) (HRRL)

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September: [Farnham Pilgrim MT Half and Marathon](#).

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September: [Bacchus Half Marathon and 10km MT](#).

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September: [New Forest Marathon](#).

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September: [Shere 42km, 21km and 10km MT races](#).

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September: [Alf Shrubbs Memorial 10km Slinfold](#).

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September: [Butser Hill Challenge](#).

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September: [Hambledon Hilly 10km MT race](#).

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September: [Pulborough Vineyard Run](#).

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September: [Winchester Half Marathon Road Race](#).

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September: [Barns Green Half/10km/5km road races](#).

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September: [Bolt round the Holt](#).

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October: [Solent Half Marathon Road Race](#). (HRRL)

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October: [Utilita Bowl 10km Road Race](#).

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October: [Clarendon Marathon and Half MT race](#).

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October: [Basingstoke Half Marathon and 10km road race](#).

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October: [Chichester Half Marathon, 10 mile and 6 Mile MT race](#)

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October: [Denmead 10km Road Race](#).

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October: [Blackdown Hill Challenge](#).

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October: [New Forest 10 mile MT race](#). (HRRL)

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November: [Hayling 10 mile Road Race](#). (HRRL)

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November: [SCCL: Benyon's Inclosure, Tadley](#).

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November: [Gosport Half Marathon](#) (HRRL).

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December: [Victory 5 mile Road Race](#) (HRRL).

HRRL = Hampshire Road Race League race.      SCCL = Southern Cross Country League race. Page 13

# Liss Runners Kit Corner

For any Liss Runners running gear please contact our “kit man” Stuart (Stuie) Lavalette:  
[stuielavalette@gmail.com](mailto:stuielavalette@gmail.com).

Note: to run in team events – such as the Southern Cross Country League races – you need to have a Liss Runners top on.



Kit available:-

Available in Male and female cuts: Running vests, T shirts and long sleeved T-shirts.

Unisex: hoodies, fleeces, rain jackets, winter jackets, head bands, baseball caps.

There are also options to have hi-viz reflective markings on vests and T-shirts that show up in car headlights. Ideal for winter evenings.

Note: The last picture is of the hi-tec running vest – fairly expensive. There needs to be a certain number in an order. An order will only be placed when there are enough items. If interested let team captain: Steve Armstrong ([stevearm85@hotmail.com](mailto:stevearm85@hotmail.com)) to go on a future possible order list. **Page 14**

Runner's Profile: For my first our Chairperson  
Catharine Seager

Where were you born? : *Oh dear, this shows a little lack of adventure, I was born in Liss when they used to have the maternity hospital here!*

Where have you lived? : *I've managed to move as far afield as Cowplain, Aldershot and now Bordon!*

When did you get into running? : *I started running properly just after turning 30.*



What got you interested in running? : *I was typical in that I enjoyed running at school but found other interests in my teens! After having my third daughter at 30, just a year after our second, I wanted to give myself a challenge and help to lose the baby weight. I signed up for a Race for Life event, within a month I was hooked!*

What do you like about running? : *So many things! I love putting music on and switching off to the world when things are a little bit too busy. It's amazing how you can go from top level stress to totally relaxed in the time it takes to run 5k! I love running with friends and having that time to just listen and catch up with how things are with them.*

*I enjoy the places you get to experience and the views you might not otherwise experience when out running.*

*I like knowing I'm keeping my body healthy and keeping a reasonable balance in life, hopefully something my children will see and learn to do also.*

*Most of all I love all the people running has brought into our lives, literally in my case a whole new family as well as lifelong friends.*

Anything you don't like about running? : *I hate the nerves before any kind of event (even a park run), but the high after pushing yourself more than you thought possible is hard to rival.*

Do you have any running heroes or memorable running events, that you have watched, that have stuck in the memory? : *Too many to mention! Most recently following the Barkley Marathon and watching Jasmin Paris on was particularly exciting. Finishing less than two minutes inside the cut off 60 hours! That lady is beyond incredible (and perhaps slightly mental)!*

*On the other end of the scale, I can remember as a child watching Sally Gunnell in the 400m hurdles during the 1992 Olympics and being in awe of just how strong and powerful she was.*

What and when was your first running race? : *Apart from the race for life events the first actual race probably would have been the Great South Run in 2012. I ran it for charity and was so determined to come in under 1 hour 40 mins. I remember those last 2 miles against the wind vividly, trying not to resort to walking ... I did! My finish time was 1:32:56*

What running performance are you most proud of? : *I think that must be last year's Solent half marathon. It's one of the HRRL events and attracts some good club runners. I spent the race trying to keep with Sarah Gurney (a Winchester runner that always finishes ahead of me) and, when I overtook her at 10 miles, I knew it was going to be a good run. I managed to overtake another lady on the stretch finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> lady overall. To come in a top 3 position at any race in that league is something I never imagined I could achieve.*

What has been your favourite running event? : *Without doubt the relays I have been lucky enough to be a part of. If I had to pick one day out of the lot, I would have to say the SDW Relay in 2023. The first year in many that we had an all-ladies team representing Liss Runners and lots of singing, cheering and eating throughout. The camaraderie between team members and support from our all-important driver, Robin, made a great event even more special. Anyone considering joining one of our Emsworth to Basingstoke or SDW relay teams next year I encourage you to throw your name in, they're honestly the best days of the running calendar in my opinion!*

What type of terrain do you prefer (trail, road cross country)? : *Cross country ... yuck! In all seriousness I am a road girl at heart, but all have their place!*

What race distance do you prefer? : *Half marathons upwards generally.*

How did you get to join Liss Runners? : *A running friend dragged me kicking and screaming to a Wednesday session. She was keen for us both to join but, as with a lot of us, the idea of a running club felt daunting. Not feeling fast enough etc. I'm extremely glad she did!*

Can you list a typical running week training wise? : *I need to get into a more structured routine! Generally, I aim for 40-50 miles a week with at least one rest day. The ideal balance is an interval session, a couple of long runs and then a few relaxed chatty ones with friends.*

Have you a running bucket list and if so, what's still to do? : *I still need to tick off the 100 miler at some point ... and that elusive sub 20-minute parkrun!*

Is there any interesting or funny running stories or anything else that may be of interest to fellow club members? : *I think my ability to get lost anywhere is well documented, resulting in climbing over walls, into restricted areas, through brambles and even wading through water through-out the years!*

Finally, Stats...

Can you list your personal best for mile, 5km, 5 mile, 10km, half marathon and full marathon? : *Mile 6:02 ; 5km 20:50 ; 5 mile 31:28 ; 10km 39:43 ; Half marathon 1:29:39 ; Marathon 3:21:15.*



## Liss Runners Pub Run Season Review 2024

All of the pub runs are now done and dusted for this year. These are organised group runs from a nice pub with nearby beautiful countryside, following written instructions with three choices of routes: Walkers of around 3 miles. Medium of around 5 miles and long of around 7 miles.

This year we had 7 runs between May and August:-

Early May: From The Rising Sun, Milland reusing routes from 8 years ago to the North of Milland.

Second Bank Holiday in May: A little further away from the Barley Mow in the lovely Surrey village of Tilford: along a bit of the River Wey and seeing a few Second World War pill boxes and such like. Area to the North-East of the village.

Early June: The Cricketers, Steep: many thanks to Richard Pegden for the routes: Up the chalk escarpment to the North of the village.

Late June: Ye Old George Inn, East Meon: Another reuse of 2017 routes. To the North-West of the village.

Early July: From Penns Place, Petersfield: many thanks to Rose for the routes: Area to the East: Deer Park, Durleigh Marsh.

Late July: The Red Lion, Fernhurst: many thanks to James White for the routes: North of the village with beautiful views around the routes but especially for the runners from the top of Blackdown Hill.

Early August: Jolly Drover, Hill Brow: South-East of the pub with great views of the ridge of the South Downs to the South.

There was a request for an additional one on the August Bank Holiday. It was too late to organise this for this year but if you want this to happen next year, please let the committee know before the first pub run in 2025, along with any kind volunteers who are able to organise one of the pub runs or any ideas on pubs.









# Finland Ultra X 110km/50km Adventure

May 25-26th 2024: Thanks to Katherine Parker for this report.



It was an early start to Gatwick with a taxi driver who thought we were all slightly mad going to Finland to run an Ultra Marathon! *Editor: agreed but what landscapes!* We were greeted by Moomin land and beautiful scenery.

We nearly missed our train stop from Helsinki to Lahti but last second threw our packs off the train and ran! A long hot walk to the hotel with goggle maps and off to registration to check our kit bags.

We had a lovely pre-race meal on a boat overlooking the picturesque lake in Lahti looking out onto the Olympic ski jump where we were to start our adventure. 6am arrived and race day for three of us, 28C and 60% humidity it was going to be a tough day ahead. Drones flew over and music pumped out, we were on our way. Six months of training and here we were!



*Editor: look at all those jagged bits: so much up and downs!*

We started straight up a hill and so they kept coming, it was the theme of the day. We weaved through beautiful forests and spotted a few wild deer and snakes, circumnavigating lakes and boulders. We ran past a pile of snow and massive ants nests in the boiling sun! Tree roots were not our friend, there were many tripping episodes. I fell foul early on as did the other Parker who managed to hit his head on a rock. The story didn't end there, Warwick also managed to add an extra 2km getting lost at a rather ambiguous piece of tape that hung on the wrong tree! We found him a check point 2 rather hot and frustrated to be led astray by a Dutch runner!



Myself and Sue also managed to get lost a couple of times but luckily the watch nav alerted us fairly swiftly. We entered a forest only to be approached by men with guns, we panicked momentarily but soon realised it was the local army. We ran past and out into the sunlight spying in front a flashing ambulance, my heart was in my mouth as it was surrounded by runners, we peered in the back doors to check it wasn't Warwick. A poor fellow lady had collapsed on the pavement with heat stroke and sustained a head injury, dazed and confused. This seemed to be the theme of the day, people over heating! We discovered the next day she was making a good recovery.

After literally 100 mosquitoes bites our arms and legs swelled and DEET was sprayed every few miles, sadly with no effect! We wasted lots of energy trying to bat them off ourselves.

My eye and ears started to swell; I think I started to resemble the elephant man! Then came sudden abdominal cramps and mild confusion, sure signs of heat stroke, it made from mile 20 interesting. I dragged myself to check point 3 and was seen by medics, who took lots of observations and asked me to stop running. We had come so far, we had to finish! Pringles, water and an hour medical penalty meant we could continue! Poor Sue, I could see she just wanted to crack on, we had 16 miles to go! I was though very thankful for the company of my PTC buddy. By the end we were both dehydrated and exhausted, we watched a couple of runners veer off course in a local town, off to buy food and water, the check points had no supplies! We scrambled through what appeared to be bush with no path, we felt Jasmin Paris like for a moment. Then a lovely local man shouted to us, well done only a kilometre to go! We cursed, my watch had died and Sue's watch was telling us we should be in camp, that last kilometre felt like an eternity.



Warwick had steamed ahead and got changed and met us on the finish line for day one, 60km. We all jumped in the beautiful cool lake taking in the peace and tranquillity and chatted whilst we ate our dehydrated rations followed by an awesome massage. None of us could face the hot sauna!

With little sleep, snorers next door and nerves we had an early start and forced down some dehydrated porridge. All feeling dehydrated and pretty achey we went out to meet the fresh-faced Imogen, ready for her first 50km ultra!





Day two was also a hot one but a little more shade, we managed to see Imogen at check point one and two, she made a few ultra-X videos and saw her lovely crew friends on route. I ran down away from a check point 2 for the call of nature whilst she was being interviewed only to be followed by a lovely camera man, who was sprinted and wanted to check I wasn't heading off in the wrong direction. Poor man!

Sue's knee started to flare up and she had to be taped up by various therapists at the checkpoints, the poles were our saviours today! We met a lovely chap who was also limping and kept him company for a few miles.

Unfortunately, I was unable to eat much and stuck to water and electrolytes to fight off further abdominal cramps, this meant a rather draining run. We approached checked point 4 and Warwick pinged across a text to say he was back at the hotel already! We picked up the pace for the last 10km and could smell victory. Many hills remained and with our brains tiring we had to be careful not to take the wrong turn! Imogen had the same issue and called us to check she was on the correct trail, we guided her into town.



It was bliss to see the lake in sight as we entered Lahti, back where it had all began! Finish line photos and back to the hotel for after party drinks. We got to see the winners a fresh-faced young couple who absolutely smashed it! We were all just happy to have completed our first one or two day ultra marathon! Warwick came in 2nd in category, myself and Sue came in together in 7th & 8th and Imogen was pleased to beat off a rival lady in her category, ready for her next ultra! What a fabulous adventure with Ultra X and PTC. We boarded to plane, tired, achey, bitten to death only to discuss where was next on the ultra bucket list! Warwick already had his planned, 100km Serpent trail in less than a month! Bonkers!



## Training Matters: Interval Training

What the hell do we get up to on a Wednesday evening? All that stopping and starting with rests in between? What's the point of that? What can it do for me? What is interval training? Read on and I'll try to answer these...

On unstructured running, "just going out for a run" at a steady pace is an important piece of running training to build up a base of fitness – often termed a tempo run or threshold training. It is especially good for beginners or runners coming back from injury with a specific term for a low speed, long period and consistent paced run: L.I.S.S.: standing for low intensity steady state. This training is largely "aerobic". Where breathed in oxygen is primarily used to generate energy. Runners generally only doing this kind of training will slowly improve but will get to "a plateau" where improvement will be limited.



What is needed to become faster is to practise running faster; obviously! Just increase the effort on runs? Well, yes but doing that over your whole run will be hard to maintain. A better way is to split your run into sections (intervals: there is that word again!). Each interval you can run much faster than over your whole run as after each interval you stop, walk or do a slow jog to recover. The recovery should be long enough to get your breathing back to normal ready for the next interval. Ideally each interval should run at the same hard intensity level as the first. So don't go too mad on the first few intervals.

**Important note:** If you are going to do intervals, ensure to fully warm up for a minimum of 5 minutes or more in cold weather, with a slow jog slowly increasing in speed. This to get the body ready for the intense effort and warm down after. Doing intense efforts from the off and you risk muscle and tendon damage. These can take an age to repair. You've been warned!

The running on the intervals, if you are trying hard enough, will be "anaerobic" where you will be relying much more on stored energy sources. The main being where glycogen is used for energy. This process creates lactate leading to a rapid increase in fatigue i.e. "the burn". Putting your body through this extends the time before you become fatigued, increases lung capacity, increases the amount of oxygen taken in and how fast it can get to where you need it: the muscles (termed VO2 max), increases the pace you can go over your whole run/race and is useful for getting up hills and the sprint at the finish line.

### Types of interval training: -

Consistent long intervals: if you are training for a 10km race something like 10 times 1km intervals or 6 times 1 mile intervals: total interval distance should ideally match the race length. Use a watch, if you know how long your Km or miles take for the interval.

Consistent shorter intervals: Such as intervals of a 2 minutes, 1 minute or even 30 seconds.

Pyramid intervals (this is what we often do on a Wednesday evening training session):-

Longer intervals first before the intervals get shorter then get longer again, such as 3 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes and repeat.

Upside down pyramid intervals: short interval first, longer in middle then back to short again: 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute and repeat.

Sawtooth intervals: such as 1 minute, 2 minute, 3 minute then back to 1 minutes and repeat.

Fartlek (Swedish for speed play): here intervals vary dependant on the route and how you feel. Intervals could be between power line poles, the stretch of straight road you are on or fast up the next hill.

Using hills: Fast uphill and recover going downhill.

After each interval remember to allow enough time for your body to recover, so you can give the same amount of effort to each interval as the first.

There is also: where you have limited time: intense intervals (a minute or less) with short recoveries: termed H.I.I.T. : high intensity interval training. Hard!