

Archive Race Reports 2008

6th January ~ Ropsley Raid nr Grantham, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Ropsley Road Runners.

This popular local race is a multi-terrain affair, run over fields, track and roads in and around the small village near Grantham. A slight frost was present as daylight broke, however clear blue skies and a brisk chilling wind added to the New Year feel. Both races were underway at the same 10 o'clock start time, with a good field of runners that would contest the narrow tracks early on before the race settled down. Prior to the race, Race Officials informed competitors that the race distance for the 6 mile race, was now approximately 8 miles, however satellite navigation watches would measure to course at 8.9 miles! Undaunted by the new distance Club members set off facing the challenge.

New to our Club Tracie Hough entered the race with little recent off road experience, however produced a strong run finishing in 1hr 25mins, Candy Louth was pleased to finish in 1.32. Next to finish Catherine Simpson 1.38, Pat Riches approximately 15 mins adrift of Catherine in 1.52 with Stephen Betts 1.54. Julie Stapleton accompanied Carolyn Crocker who had not run above 6 miles before today and was delighted to finish this extended race in together in 2.04. In the 13 mile race measured at 13.6 miles Dave Tilley in a purple patch of form stormed home in first place some 5 minutes in front of the 2nd place runner, winning this event for the first time. Chris Smith also had a excellent run finishing in 1.53, Paul Freemantle pleased to break 2 hrs in 1.58 as was Keith Boseley just a drift of Paul in 1.59. Dave Raynes produced another consistent run in 2.03, with Angie Harvey and Caz Flannigan comfortably finishing together in 2.06. Sadly Dave Taylor competing in the 13 mile race would pull up at the 5 mile point with a calf strain and not finish the race despite a strong start. Chris Smith's 13 year old son Matthew competing for Grantham AC ran the extended 6 mile race in an excellent time of 1.22.

12th & 13th Jan ~ Disney Half & Full Marathon Florida, USA, Road.

On Saturday 12th Jan Catherine took part in the Walt Disney World Half Marathon finishing in 2hr 17min 44sec just one min slower than her last one in 2006. Chris competed in the "Goofy Challenge" which consists of the Half Marathon on the Saturday, 1hr 38min 01sec (224th), followed by the Full Marathon on the next day, 3hr 58min 25sec (1266th)

Two days to get up at 2am Yikes.

Background - We flew out of Gatwick with Sports Tours International on Thursday 10th and returned on Friday 18th this gave us plenty of time to get ready for the races both of which start at 6am and lots of time to enjoy the theme parks. When they call it Walt Disney World they are not joking! It's huge beyond belief. If you slept in a different Disney hotel room every night you would be there for over 70 years. There are 4 theme parks which take at least a day each to explore and many other attractions. Sports Tours International is the way to do this trip, we have been to Orlando three times with them and the only problems have been of Virgin Atlantic's making.

The Half Marathon started at 6am but we had to be on the bus at 3am so up at 2am! Very early. We paid extra for the "Runners Retreat" package which included a heated/cooled marquee with carpet, tables & chairs, private toilets, private bag dump, private massage, food & drink and most importantly Disney characters to have your picture taken with, all with no queues. At about 5am we dumped our bags and began the long walk to the start. Catherine was in pen B and Chris got in pen A so good starts. The marshalling and toilets on the way to the start are way beyond anything seen before. After lots of loud music, American national anthem and of course mice talking we started dead on 6am in the dark to fireworks. The course was interesting and fun but not as good as the Full Marathon. We ran from Epcot to the Magic Kingdom and back going through both parks. Running through the Magic Kingdom is really something.

Water & poweraid was available every mile and CliffShot at 10 miles, the water stations were huge and very well manned.

The course is basically flat and fast but the temperature at 3am was 64 deg f, whatever that is in English, and the humidity must have been getting on for 100% so just shorts and vests and no coats to carry to the start this time (not like in 2006 Brrrr Cold).

The finish, like all the course, was brilliantly organised and staffed. We got lots of food and a huge Donald Duck medal, which was worth the run alone. In addition to this we got long sleeve technical tops from the huge Expo.

Back to the Runners Retreat for bacon and eggs and more drinks.

A few stats – 12288 finishers, 4961 male, 7327 female, Catherine 3732nd, Chris 224th (First back from the Runners Retreat so my choice of masseurs)

The Marathon day started the same, up at 2am on the bus 3am then get to the Runners Retreat and sleep for an hour. After coffee and bagel I slowly woke up, slowly. Great atmosphere with lots of like minded people so all strange. Off to the start. Pen A again so up with the speedy boys, I should have trained really. The start was even more extreme than the half with fireworks giving daylight conditions and oil rig style flames, no I have no idea why either.

There were two start areas; I was at the Blue "Elite" start. We had the best course running "around the world" at Epcot before joining up with the Red starters at 4m. We then ran up to the Magic Kingdom, and through it, then down through Animal Kingdom, Disney Hollywood Studios, Disney Boardwalk, then back "around the world" at Epcot to the finish in the "Magic Lot" car park, when I say car park it's the size of a village. The course is flat and fast but it was hot again and the tired legs and hamstrings held me back. Running through the theme parks is like nothing else, runners were stopping to have photos taken with Disney characters who were out in force. All the rides were going and all lights on so a real spectacle.

The finish was like clockwork, food etc and a huge special edition 15th Anniversary Mickey Mouse medal, they kept it under wraps till the day and said it was the best medal ever made for a Marathon. It's certainly the best I've ever seen, huge shiny brass with enamel filled in Mickey and words with an enamelled XV hanging below. In addition to this monster I earned the Goofy Medal, well worth the hard work. Of course in addition I got a long sleeve technical top for each event, I will be wearing these a lot. Don't ask about the hat that's special.

Back to the Runners Retreat for dinner, drinks, get changed and a massage. The massage was a long job as I had a lot of knee and hamstring damage but top bloke mended me and iced me up so it was a good hour before I headed back to the hotel and a well earned bath and sleep. Oh yes even the bus stop was just yards away from the Runners Retreat, nothing was by chance everything is planned to the nth degree.

In summary – Two Brilliant races in one weekend, not too many people, (See London Far too many), perfect organisation. There is no reason to not do this race and every reason to do it, start saving now it's worth every penny.

Marathon Stats – 12964 finishers, 6760 male, 6204 female, Chris 1266th

Goofy Stats – 3000 registered, Chris 147th

Thanks to Chris Smith for his report.

18th Jan ~ Dubai Marathon Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Road.

Nick & Anna Berrill, competed in the Dubai Marathon in the United Arab Emirates on Friday 18th January. In the race in which Ethiopian Star Haile Gebrselassie would run the second fastest Marathon time ever, Nick also produced an outstanding personal time, despite the obvious heat in finishing in 2hr 45mins, 28th overall and winning his Vet Category. Not to be outshone Anna also finished in an excellent time of 3hr 8mins, 16th Female home, 1st in her Vet Category and 1st British Female.

Thanks to Mike Folland for the report info.

20th Jan ~ Folksworth 15 Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, 15 miles, Road.

Host Club ~ Yaxley Runners & Joggers.

This challenging two lap course is used by many runners as a build up race for the Flora London Marathon, with some of our ten Club members that have entered the London Marathon competing. The rain present on the journey south now gone, leaving grey skies with albeit extremely mild temperatures. A strong field of runners lined up for the start of the race, and with a course boasting no less than six steep climbs, pacing the first lap was going to be vital for a good time. Dave Tilley did exactly that with a strong finish in 1.32.23 (7th overall), knocking over two minutes of last years race. Paul Freemantle returning back to form was pleased with 1.56.52 as was Mike Folland hitting his pre race target of sub 2hrs finishing in 1.58.25, Chris Smith suffering from his running exploits the previous weekend struggled home in 1.59.14, running back to form also Angie Harvey was delighted to finish in 1.59.46. Laden with cold Dave Raynes was please to finish and content with 2.06.33, Tracie Hough dramatically increasing her race distance finished strongly in an excellent time of 2.07.15. New member to Sleaford Town Runners Stephen Brear, though well known to most of our members, produced a fine run finishing in 2.21.51. Catherine Simpson again feeling the effects of her Half Marathon the week before combined with racing five consecutive weekends crossed the finish in 2.44.42. Pat Riches arrived on the morning of the race with lower back pains, and although started the race, aired on the side of caution and retired early in the race.

10th February ~ Stamford 30k Stamford, Lincolnshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Stamford Striders.

Stamford Striders St Valentines 30k road race on Sunday 10th February was as daunting as it was long. Voted 24th out of the top 50 UK Races, this is one of the more popular London Marathon build up races. Unseasonably warm temperatures under windless blue skies, which felt more like a spring day than the depths of winter. A large field of runners lined up for the start of this race, and with the barmy weather present, the dilemma of choice of clothing for competitors was to be crucial for this distance race.

Starting and finishing in Stamford, this mainly rural race takes you around the scenic countryside that surrounds Stamford. Hills dominate and are as unrelenting as was the warm sunshine for the duration. There is always a fantastic atmosphere generated by marshals and competitors alike which only adds to this race.

Dave Tilley started the race with the sole aim of beating his previous time. Running well in training and races Dave would surpass his goal breezing home in an impressive 1.58.04, 17th overall, taking six minutes off his course PB. Chris Smith ran a steady first half of the race, and was comfortable finishing in 2.17.42 another impressive time. Alex Hetherington as with Chris relaxed into the race and was delighted in finishing in 2.27.29, as was Mike Folland hitting his pre race target of sub 2.30 in crossing the line in 2.29.30. An off key Paul Freemantle laboured home with no excuses in 2.44.20. Not so Candy Louth who delighted in the race as with her time of 2.54.24. Stephen Brear just missed out on sub three hours, however Stephen was rightly pleased with 3.00.15. Pat Riches shrugged off a recent injury and with her longest run this year banked good mileage for the London Marathon, finishing in a respectable 3.33.31.

Deserving its race ranking status, this was another well organised race by Stamford Striders, who this year even booked some nice weather... even if a little warm!

23rd Feb ~ Belvoir Challenge Vale of Belvoir, Leicestershire 15 & 26 Miles, Multi-Terrain

Host Club ~ Friends of Harby School & Vale Striders.

The Belvoir Challenge on Saturday 23rd February is a must race for all off road enthusiasts. This event takes you in and around the scenic countryside of the vale of Belvoir taking in views of the splendid Belvoir Castle. Organised so as to raise money for the local school in Harby, this race is growing in popularity amongst walkers and runners alike. Two race distances take place 15 & 26 miles predominantly off road. As with all these events distances are always approximate. With many runners running with satellite navigation built into their stopwatches, distances overall distances were recorded at nearer 17 miles & 27 miles. A mass start of walkers and runners alike at both distances at 9.00am under mild overcast conditions. Usually the course is barely walkable due to mud and water on the fields and forestry sections of the course. However the weeks prior to the race had been blessed with a mixture of frost, and dry mild conditions, making for a far more manageable and quicker course than of recent years. Dave (The Fox) Tilley started the race full of optimism and excited over racing on his favoured terrain. Despite leading for much of the race Dave would pay the price with his pacey start, with the lead gone Dave would slip back to eighth overall. Disappointed at the outcome, Dave still recorded a superb time of 2.03. Paul Freemantle recovered from an off day at the Stamford 30k weeks earlier and crossed in 2.26. Keith Boseley accompanied Paul for the majority of the race despite running with an injury and only just trailed Paul in 2.28. Chris Smith running with his 13 year son Matthew (Grantham AC) crossed in great time of 2.42. Catherine Simpson thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of this race and was delighted with 3.27, as were Julie Stapleton, Lynn Ellis and Carolyn Crocker who agreed to stay together throughout the race, who would rally around Carolyn who had a knee problem at around mile 11, crossing together in 4.13.

Undaunted by the 26 miles recorded afterwards at 27, Dave Taylor, Alex Hetherington and Mike Folland set off for a much longer day's running. Agreeing to race together until a set point near the end when either one of them would push on if able to, proved to a great plan of action as all three finished in excellent times. However it would prove to be Alex who pushed on in another display of powerful running crossing the finish in 4.50, Dave and Mike crossed the line together in a whisker over five hours hitting their pre race targets.

Fantastic atmosphere, great food afterwards and if you love off road, diary this for 2009!

24th Feb ~ Sleaford Half Marathon RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire, Mainly Road / Multi-Terrain

Host Club ~ Sleaford Striders AC.

An overcast windy day greeted the runners for the Golden Emu Oil Sleaford Half Marathon held at RAF Cranwell on Sunday 24th February. Twelve Club members travelled the short distance to compete in this local race, billed as a challenging undulating course with a small off road section at the start and mid section of the course. Combine the course with a strong head wind for large parts of the race and it certainly lived up to its billing. Starting and finishing at RAF Cranwell the route took you out onto the countryside back roads, along the Viking Way before turning near the Village of Wellingore and back towards RAF Cranwell.

With the race underway, the lead vehicle accidentally led the runners on another lap of the playing fields before taking them out onto the course proper. Despite the mile markers now being out of sync due to the extra lap, the runners and race marshals would keep the atmosphere going throughout. With the race now in full swing the finish line was hastily relocated to its revised position to account for the extra distance at the start of the race. Dave Tilley gave it his all despite his efforts from racing the day before, still managing a fantastic time of 1.23.02 14th in the race overall. Simon England racing for the first time at this distance set himself a PB of 1.41.02 another great time. Paul Freemantle heavy legged from the previous days race yet satisfied with 1.43.35, as was Chris Smith again racing the day before finishing in 1.45.05. Simon Lunn set a personal best in 1.45.14. Dave Raynes running some consistently quick times of late crossed in 1.45.51. Stephen Brear crossed smiling with a pleasing time of 1.55.15. Candy Louth took almost 4 minutes of her PB in setting a new one of 1.56.05. Sheila Honeybun stepping up to Half Marathon distance for the first time beating her pre race target and setting a PB of 2.06.33. Trevor Brown with little race distance in his legs was content with his 2.11.56; Stephen Betts competing in his first Half Marathon was thrilled with 2.15.21. Returning to this distance after many years and completing our team of runners Alistair Whitaker just adrift of Stephen in 2.16.47. In the Fun Run John Hodgkison ran with Fiona Robertson and their children Ewan, Robert & Flora. Ewan ran a great race and sprinted to finish in front of Dad John and Brother Robert, with Flora just edging out Mum Fiona in the sprint to the line... Great stuff!!

Despite the error with the lead vehicle this was an enjoyable albeit challenging race. Credit goes to Host Club Sleaford Striders AC for quickly and accurately relocating the finish line.

7th March ~ Abu Dhabi Striders Half Marathon & 10k Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Road.

Host Club ~ Abu Dhabi Striders.

Anna and Nick Berrill ran together in the Half Marathon, while Mike Folland entered the 10k saving his legs for the upcoming Oakley 20 miles. As last year it was up at 4am with a 4.45am start for the 90 mile drive from Dubai down the motorway to Abu Dhabi. Conditions were absolutely perfect, 17°C with low humidity at the 7.00am start just after sunrise. Despite coming out from UK winter, it wasn't really hot even when the sun got going later. Small fields of about 100 runners in the Half Marathon and 50 the 10k race, which started half an hour later, also contributed to a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere.

The lovely surroundings at the Golf and Equestrian Club was a great backdrop to the really fast, flat course. Anna ran 1:24:45, her best time since going out to the Gulf and having her last two babies, to be 1st female and 5th overall out of 99. Nick was recovering from various injury niggles so stayed with Anna but still came in 2nd Vet. Mike felt the lack of recent speedwork after long London training runs and finished the 10k in 45:54 to be 2nd Over 50 and 11th overall out of 52.

The £12 entry fee included use of luxurious changing facilities at the Club and a great open air brunch.

Thanks to Mike Folland for his Report.

9th Mar ~ Ashby 20 Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, Road.

Host Club ~ Ivanhoe Runners.

Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire, was the chosen destination for Candy Louth and Pat Riches as they targeted the hilly Ashby 20 road race as they continued their training for this year's London Marathon. Famed for its challenging course this tests your mental strength as it does your fitness. Racing the distance for the first time Candy was more than satisfied with her time of 3.16.49 as could be said of Pat who finished in 3.45.16.

9th Mar ~ Newton's Fraction Half Marathon Grantham, Lincolnshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Grantham AC.

An unexpectedly dry and calm day greeted the five Seaford Town Runners who, made the short journey to Grantham for the Newton's Fraction Half Marathon hosted by Grantham AC on Sunday March 9th 2008. The course is mainly undulating but two steep hills at six and ten miles make the course a challenge. The challenge of the hills is more than made up for by the scenic course which also takes in several miles of canal banks before winding back through outlying villages to finish at the South Kesteven Sports Stadium.

Nigel Wilcock was the first club member home in 1:30:32 followed by Chris Smith in 1:31:56. Simon Lunn came home delighted with a PB at 1.42.33. Dave Raynes was happy with his time of 1:45:50 as was Stephen Brear who at 1:49:58 was very pleased to improve his previous years time for the course. Overall an excellent event recommended for 2009.

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his report.

9th Mar ~ Mondri 15 March, Cambridgeshire, Road & Cycleway.

Host Club ~ March Athletic Club.

Not as bad as the title suggests! – Whitemoor Prison being the venue for the Mondri 15. This is a very flat course which is open to the wind with no ups, no downs, just flat straight roads. It is very well marshalled, although it could do with some extra drink stations. With speed being very much the only way to run this course, Dave Tilley finished in overall 4th position, 2nd vet 40, in a time of 1.32.36 (somehow 7 seconds slower than Folksworth). It is a very well organised race – t-shirt, bacon butty and as much tea as you can drink, all for £9. Prize was an engraved beer glass (not yet in bottle bank!) I would recommend this race for marathon training for those who don't like hills.

Thanks to Dave for his Report.

9th Mar ~ East Hull 20 Hull Yorkshire and the Humber, Road.

Host Club ~ East Hull Harriers & AC.

A bright sunny Sunday morning greeted Paul Freemantle on 9th March as he set off for Hull to compete in the Hull 20 road race. This 20 mile road race did not have any major hills to climb, but once exposed on surrounding countryside lanes strong gusting winds added to the challenge of the distance. After a steady 10 miles runners turned anti clockwise for a windy second half of the race. With 5 miles to the finish and a full head wind to contend with, the finish line could not come soon enough. Paul crossed the line in 2.42.40 setting a PB for the distance.

16th Mar ~ Oakley 20 Mile Oakley, Bedford, Bedfordshire, Road

Host Club ~ Bedford Harriers.

Alex Hetherington and Mike Folland travelled down to Oakley in Bedfordshire for what might be regarded as the ideal training run ready for London Marathon. Its position in the calendar means it draws runners from around the country, who are preparing for London Marathon and the undulating course along some very pretty country lanes, also draws runners just for the pleasure of the event. Some of the attractions of the course were however tampered by the weather, cold, wet and windy, which made the choice of clothes difficult and those facing the same conditions at a future event

(5°C with a "stiff" breeze and a steady wind blown drizzle) a long sleeve breathable top, running vest and a gillet proved ideal. Heavy rain before the start of the race and unrelenting drizzle throughout meant that the road was flooded in three places, which presented certain difficulties. The quickest and safest method of coping with these, after some consideration, seemed to be to take a direct route straight through the middle, those runners trying to find a route around the side invariably seemed to lose time and many struggled to keep their footing on the wet grass. Alex and Mike both had individual plans and after a short but inevitable delay to cross the start line (30 seconds) after the gun fired, they set off into a very strong head wind. Alex at an intended eight minute mile pace, Mike, being more of a continental, set off aiming for his km pace. Alex went onto cross the finish line with a time of 2:43:21, Mike coming home only a few minutes after in 2:49:10, second in his age group (over 21's) a remarkable

achievement especially in view of the conditions. The long drive to and from the venue excepted, both runners felt the day was well worthwhile for the London preparations and the appalling weather allowed for a certain satisfaction once it had been conquered!!

Thanks to Alex for her Report.

16th Mar ~ Louth 10 Mile Louth, Lincolnshire, Road
Host Club ~ Louth AC.

Travelling to Louth in driving wind and rain was always going to challenge the enthusiasm to race. A new course for 2008 lay ahead for the Club members that traveled to compete in this 10 mile road race. By the 11o'clock start time the rain had all but abated however the wind remained under rain laden skies. The first 5 miles once clear of Louth was to be a gradual climb on quiet roads, albeit exposed to strong head winds. Giant wind farm turbines were in constant view as you climbed with their massive blades majestically turning, a reminder if needed of the strength of the wind. Finally turning back to Louth and a more sheltered run to the finish, with the last 3 miles wind assisted!

Dave Tilley racing at the front of the field for the duration of the race would storm home in 5th place 2nd in his Vet category breaking the hour for the 1st time in a new PB time of 59.27. Chris Smith was quietly satisfied with 1.10.23 as was Paul Freemantle with 1.13.51. Angie Harvey racing for the first time since January was delighted with 1.17.31 2nd in her Vet category. Alistair Whitaker continues to reduce his times knocking over 8 minutes of his previous PB in finishing in 1.32.54. Pat Riches completed our Club member's home, comfortably finishing in 1.42.43.

In the two and half mile Fun Run Chris Smith's 13yr old Son Matthew running for Grantham AC, had a fantastic result winning the race in a time of 14.44.

29th Mar ~ Caythorpe Canter Caythorpe, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

A bright start to the day for the Club members competing in the Caythorpe Canter. This a 13 & 26 mile multi terrain race both starting at 9am from Caythorpe in Lincolnshire. Dave Tilley, Alex Hetherington, Chris Smith, Mike Folland and Shaun Louth would take on the 13 mile race with Dave Raynes & Dave Taylor the 26 mile. Wearing Grantham AC colours Chris Smith's 13 year old son Matthew who would run with Chris. Dave, Alex, Chris and Matthew ran for much of the race together, Dave ran a relaxed race finishing with Alex in 1.50 who finished 2nd Female. Chris and Matthew also finished together in 1.51, with Matthew finishing 1st junior for the second year running. Mike a few seconds under 2 hours and Shaun Louth finishing in a creditable time of 2:28. A good start to the 26mile off road marathon sunny, but a cool stiff breeze which was to dog the runners for quite a few miles head on, making the conditions at times hard going. 3 check points offering hot and cold drinks and good variety of eats greeted runners at 6miles 15miles and 21miles along this tough course. The 26 mile course takes in the villages of Stubton, Marston, Barkstone where you then have to climb minnutes hill straight after trying to force down half a mars bar, finally Ancaster before the long climb back to Caythorpe college and then descending to the finish in Caythorpe. I had a good steady run to the 21 mile check point, then I think the mars bar finally kicked in along with a couple of pieces of flap jack allowing me a very good last five mile to be home 30 minutes ahead of last years time in 4hours 6 minutes in 5th place overall. Dave Taylor ran a good race over the first half, and on to the 22mile marker where he tied up a little climbing a very muddy track on towards Caythorpe college, he managed to get home in seventh place overall just under 4 hours 15 minutes. Many thanks to Bob Panter and his team who always make this a great event.

Thanks to Mike for his 13 mile race info and Dave Raynes for his 26 mile report.

30th Mar ~ Belvoir Half Marathon Hose, Leicestershire, Road.

Club member's Dave Tilley, Caz Flanningan and Chris Smith competed in the Belvoir Half Marathon. Run in similar weather conditions to Lincoln this is a flat fast course starting and finishing in the Village of Hose. A delighted Dave Tilley having warmed up running the 13 mile Caythorpe Canter the previous day would reduce his PB by a minute crossing the line in 1.19.58 finishing 11th overall. Chris Smith produced another consistent race and time in 1.33.17, with Caz Flanningan following Dave's lead in setting a new PB of 1.42.35. In the 4 1/2 mile Fun Run Chris Smith's 13yr year old son Matthew running in Grantham & District AC colours would finish in an excellent time of 28.35 second overall.

30th Mar ~ Friskney Half Marathon Friskney, Boston, Lincolnshire, Road
Host Club ~ Boston & District AC.

With many of the Counties runners heading for the Lincoln 10k Road Race on Sunday 30th March, it was therefore no surprise of the reduced turnout for the Friskney Half Marathon near Boston. For our Club members that travelled it was to be a warm race in sometimes breezy conditions on the narrow roads that surround the village of Friskney. A flat fast course with no hills was only hindered by the final 3 mile run to the finish into a breezy head wind although it did bring some relief to the warm sunshine present throughout the race. Paul Freemantle was more than satisfied with a seasons best time of 1.38.52. Angie Harvey also delighted to cross as 2nd lady home in 1.40.48 1st in her Vet category. Alistair Whitaker continues to bring down his PB in 2.12.37, with Pat Riches pleased with 2.17.23 3rd in her Vet Category. Many thanks to Boston & District AC and the Marshalls for all their support despite the low turn out.

30th Mar ~ Lincoln 10k Lincoln, Lincolnshire, Road.

The Lincoln 10k has grown each year with ever increasing competitors taking part. This fast City 10k starts near the Yarborough Leisure Centre and ultimately rounding the historic Cathedral before finishing within the Castle grounds. With races of this size there are always logistical problems which the organisers are constantly striving to resolve, however it still remains popular amongst runners for the grandeur of the finish. A delayed start of up to 20 minutes was made bearable by the glorious warm weather that would remain throughout the race. Simon England the first of our Club members to finish and setting a new PB of 40.50 162nd overall, Keith Boseley pleased to finish in 44.05. Steve Roulston competing again in Club colours and finishing in a good time of 47.12, soon to follow Stephen Brear content with 48.06. Candy Louth smashed her PB reducing it by an amazing 5 minutes to 50.28. Tracie Hough ran a creditable time of 51.04 as did Holly McDonnell running her first 10k in a fantastic 51.09. Shelia Honeybun not far behind in 52.46, next home Denise Jackson in 56.01. Lynn Ellis just missed out on breaking the hour in 1.00.02, with Stephen Betts content to finish in 1.00.57. Catherine Simpson 1.01.18, Julie Stapleton running and finishing together with Carolyn Crocker who would set a new PB of 1.02.30.

5th April ~ Coniston 14 Coniston, Lake District, Cumbria, Road.

We arrived at Coniston in the Lake District with the clouds rolling in over the mountains and glad we had brought running kit for all weathers!. The race started at 11.00 am at the local school and went immediately uphill for 3 miles a nice steady start. The course then undulates along the side of the lake with a long downhill to a little place called Sunny Bank. The weather by now was warm and sunny with the wind behind us. After the first water station the course turns into a narrow lane and then up the other side of the lake with the most amazing views of the mountains bathed in sunshine. You can then see the front runners in the distance charging up the hills to come and thinking Have I really got to go up there! The one thing about this race is that there really is as much downhill as up and with legs and arms flying I was able to pick one or two runners off each time. After the killer hill at about 11 miles I knew that apart from the incline into the village that was the mountain climbing over and I had survived another Coniston 14. I had a great time and chatted to many fellow runners on the way sharing jelly babies and Kendal mint cake. We will be back in a couple of years for this superb race.

Chris 1 hr 42

Thanks to Catherine for her Report.

6th Apr ~ Ranby 10 Mile Ranby, nr Retford, Nottinghamshire, Road & Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Ranby Prison Running Club.

The same course and 2 o'clock start time, although the weather could not of been different than that of the previous year. A blustery snow shower would send the runners into what Shaun Louth described as the "Emperor Penguin huddle". With the race underway having had the runners encouraging the starter to sound the air horn, the weather suddenly passed with warm sunshine now present, only in England! This is a great course with a bit of everything, hills, inclines, a mile off road section and great downhill stretches. Paul Freemantle thoroughly enjoyed the race finishing in a time of 1.13.11, and great to see Fiona Robertson racing having only run the distance once before. Fiona and Angie Harvey would run at eight minute mile pace and crossed on time in 1.19.59 and 1.20.01 respectively. Simon Lunn had an off day after a week of being unwell and pleased to finish in a time of 1.26.23. Shaun Louth surprised himself going quicker over 10 mile than in recent years with a solid time of 1.32.42. Thanks to Candy Louth for her support, and also to Chris & Catherine stopping off on the way back from Coniston to shout support.

13th Apr ~ London Marathon London, Road.

The London Marathon is billed as the best Marathon in the world, and for many it is! The sheer volume of runners can hinder your race if you are chasing a time, however passing the historic buildings both old & new combined with the fantastic atmosphere generated by the thousands lining the route, this makes for a memorable day. The weather was certainly changeable with warm sunshine to sudden heavy wintry down pours throughout the race.

Chris Smith would start at pace with Anna Berrill not far behind, and for the majority of the first half of the race this remained. However Anna would up the pace in the second half to finish in an excellent time of 3.10.38, and in doing so qualifying for an elite Ladies start for 2009. Chris although slowing in the later stages would still finish in a Season's Best time of 3.20.30. Alex Hetherington was pleased to finish and satisfied with her time of 3.38.46. Mike Folland struggled in the later stages and although missing his target time of 3.40 was still satisfied with 3.44.31. Dave Raynes enjoyed the day running as a Caveman! Finishing in 4.14.47. Candy Louth running her first ever Marathon paced herself round and was trilled to finish in 4.21.17, as was Pat Riches who knocked some 30 minutes of her previous PB of two years ago crossing in 4.56.42.

Thanks to Catherine for her Report.

20th Apr ~ Derbyshire 10k Pride Park Stadium, Derby, Derbyshire, Road.

Club member's Husband & Wife David & Sheila Honeybun travelled to Derbyshire to compete in the Derbyshire Building Society 10k. This Undulating course takes place in and around Derby City Centre with the race finishing inside Pride Park Stadium, home of Premiership football team Derby County FC. New Club member David in his first race in Club colours finished in a respectable time of 47.40 with Sheila returning another consistent 10k time in 54.51.

20th April ~ Wirksworth Incline Fell Races Wirksworth, Derbyshire, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Wirksworth Running Club.

Up at 7am for the drive to Wirksworth near Matlock, out of the window it's raining that was the weather sorted for the whole day. We arrived in plenty of time at an industrial estate at the bottom of the Wirksworth Incline, a very very big hill. 107 people ran the adult race and 21 in the under 16's race. That may not seem many but they were all double hard fell runners, Hmmmm what am I doing here? The under 16's course was 1 mile up the incline a small loop then 1 mile down (much faster than up!) Matthew did very well and finished 6th / 21 in front of a group of Mansfield Harriers girls. The adult race was a bit harder than that, we had the same lung busting 1 mile up with it's 300ft climb then we went cross country round fields for 2 miles that included another 300ft of climbs and not so good trails, this area is higher than the Black Rocks trig point so it was a bit nippy in the rain. The finish was the same 1 mile down the trail very fast with a staircase then a sprint through the industrial estate at the end. I managed 40th / 107 in 30:01 so quite happy with that. If I had not missed so many Lincoln Hills sessions due to London I would have been higher up but as they say you can't do everything! Yes you can it's Sheffield Half next week. This is a great fun low key race and with entry of £4, a medal, marshalls everywhere and first aid cover well what more do you want! We will be back next year, hopefully for a sunny run.

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

26th Apr ~ Dambuster 10 Mile Derwent Reservoir, Peak District, Derbyshire, Multi-Terrain.

An excellent spring morning on the side of Derwent Reservoir saw the 2nd running of the annual Dambusters 10 mile trail race. The limit for this race is usually 200 but they stretched it this year due to the demand from runners wanting to enjoy this most scenic of runs to 237 starters. Up hill and on tracks to start with, undulating along the side of Derwent reservoir to turn at 4 miles known locally as slippery stones. The course then turns back towards the dam on the opposite side, again on tracks for about a mile before reaching the tarmac road way which leads you to the finish line, where a fantastic spread of home made cakes and drinks await the finishers. Excellent views all the way on this race. no awards at the finish other than a certificate, but well worth the £10.00 entry fee. I had an excellent time for a change crossing the finish line 1 hr 16 mins 28 secs, well pleased and such a beautiful spring day, a couple of pints in a local pub beer garden finished the day in style. Thanks to Dave Raynes for his report

27th Apr ~ Blackpool Half & Full Marathon Blackpool, Lancashire, Road.

The bright lights and many attractions of Blackpool attract thousands of people from all over the UK each year, but for our Club members donkey rides and candy floss were on hold, as they prepared for the Blackpool Half and Full Marathon. An early 9am start time meant an early night and early alarm call to join the 1500 runners competing in both distances. Both race distances started with light rain and grey skies, which would remain for much of the race. Mainly run up and down the promenade passing the famous Blackpool Tower with the full marathon completing a second loop of the course.

Angie Harvey chasing a target time of sub 1.40 for the half marathon would comfortably hit her target finishing 2nd in her vet category in 1.38.22 12th female home overall. Alistair Whitaker chasing a target of 2.10 would finish delighted in 2.05.58, a PB since returning to running last year. Candy Louth fresh from competing in the London Marathon would finish with Alistair in 2.05.58 Lea Addelee full of enthusiasm for running at present would finish in 2.20.10 setting a PB in the process.

With the half marathon over for our Club members, they would return to the finish to join Pat Riches in cheering home our marathon runners. Dave (The Fox) Tilley chasing his much wanted time of sub 3hrs having narrowly missed out last year. There were no such dramas this year as Dave smashed through 3hrs in a hugely impressive PB time of 2.55.15, 5th in his highly competitive vet category and 35 overall in the race. Paul Freemantle's target time of 3.35 was comfortably achieved in a new PB of 3.27.50. Shaun Louth switching from the half to the full marathon distance a couple of weeks prior to the race chased home his second fastest marathon time in 4.27.34, and declared afterwards marathon running was all in the mind!

27th Apr ~ Bourne Woods 5 Mile Bourne, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Simon England, Trevor Brown, Julie Bumby and friend of Sleaford Town Runners Ann Mason travelled the short distance to Bourne to compete in this multi-terrain 5 mile race through Bourne Woods. Despite a warm day Simon England would have a tremendous run finishing 9th overall in 32.20 Trevor returning to form over short distance also had a fine run crossing in 37.49. With Julie also in a good time of 53.33. Ann would record a time of 52.16

27th Apr ~ Lochaber Marathon Fort William, West Highlands of Scotland, Road.

Host Club ~ Lochaber AC.

Well the Weather was in the 20s bracket. It feels like Summer had come early, compared with the Marathon last year when it was snowing and raining non stop. So I was happy this year it was fine weather. 599 runners took part including one runner from Lincoln and District Runners and one from Scunthorpe who was also competing. Its was really nice to meet people from our area. We started in the quaint town of Fort William at 11am on the dot. We started running on the back roads where there was not too many marshals present, so you had to be aware of some very bad car driving. The surrounding countryside looked special to me and more so the mountains. It was difficult especially after 14 miles, when you hit the longest road which you couldn't believe but for seeing it with your own eyes. My legs was getting tighter as were that of the other runners. I will certainly do it again next year including John O'Groats and Orkney.

Stephen's time was: 4 hrs 45 mins 51 sec. Well done to Lochaber Athletics Club and to Organiser Douglas Macdonald.

Thanks to Stephen for his Report.

27th Apr ~ Sheffield Half Marathon Sheffield, South Yorkshire, Road.

A very early start from Ancaster at 7am as the race started in Sheffield at 9:30am We woke to drizzle and rain, Simon Lunn woke to feed the baby and to open his birthday cards! The Don Valley Stadium is huge and the perfect venue for a city race with acres of indoor space, bars, shops and even toilets. We started late because some bloke was yapping, the course was a very interesting and complicated route round the city with a cruel climb for 1 mile to half way followed by a fast down hill for a mile on the other side of the road so you could watch fellow runners suffer! I got down to 4:30 min/mile on one part. More pedestrian areas then a very strange lap of the stadium to finish on the track and collect my medal and Red Bull (Not for Catherine as we had drunk it by then) There were 4,537 chip timed finishers. I was 316th in 1:30:26 just shy of my target (darn hills go up as well), Simon got 1:51:13 to finish 2,023rd on his birthday run with Catherine Simpson 4,049th in 2:19:08 We will be back next year for this is a good event. Matthew age 13 did very well to come 4th in the 3k fun run in 9min 25sec just 100m behind the winner, does not sound so much fun at that speed! We later found out the course was 200m short but that still gives him a power of ten 100 (for U17) time to go with his 1500m power of ten performance. He was quite happy.

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

4th May ~ Great East Anglia Run Kings Lynn, Norfolk, Road.

Two members of Sleaford Town Runners; Simon England and Trevor Brown travelled the short distance down the A17 to compete in the Great East Anglian 10k run in Kings Lynn Norfolk. The event has been awarded the "Gold Standard" status by the British Association of Road Races and is now considered to be one of the Premier 10k road races in the area. The course is a fast , flat single lap course winding its way through the historic town of Kings Lynn. The course and venue make for a wonderful atmosphere, as the support of the spectators is superb. This event now rivals the Lincoln 10k. Entries on the day were 1693, it was a really hot day and Trevor Brown found the conditions hard but managed a credible 48.06 finishing in 357 place. Simon England continued his superb form and thoroughly enjoyed the day finishing in a great time of 41.00 and 89 position. We would encourage more Club members to support this great local event next year.

Thanks to Trevor for his Report.

4th May ~ Langtoft 10k Langtoft near Market Deeping, Peterborough, Road.

A very good run between Bourne and Peterborough. A fast flat course that is well designed. There are enough staff, drinks, parking and a nice start and a really good finish. Well worth the trip and a very good target race for Toonies of all standards next year. I ran 42:08 after a 17 mile run yesterday and a 5k the night before so quite happy with the time.

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

11th May ~ Eye 10k Eye, Peterborough, Road.

Host Club ~ Eye Community Runners.

No change to the route for this popular of 10k races, although the wet cooler weather of the previous year was replaced with clear skies and temperatures hitting the mid 20's! Another sizable field of runners of over 500 lined up for the start of this race. With the sun beating down it was to some relief to start, however as the race progressed it became clear that PBs usually a possibility on this course would be few and far between. Dave Tilley first home in 38.09, followed in by Nigel Wilcock in 41.03, who was pleased with his time despite the conditions. Simon England crossed in 43.03 and relieved to finish as was Keith Boseley 46.07 and Paul Freemantle 46.42. Angie Harvey finished in 47.46 with Caz Flannigan just adrift in 48.15, Trevor Brown next home in 48.37. Sheila Honeybun looked relaxed crossing in 58.14, Pat Riches 1.05.28 closely followed in by Julie Stapleton and Carolyn Crocker 1.06.31. Despite the heat this is a great 10k, well organised by Eye Community Runners and a fantastic atmosphere. No horse brass this year but a nice memento all the same.

11th May ~ Pisa Marathon Tuscany, central Italy, Road.

Toonies Chris Smith and Dave Raynes travelled "Aerosmith" to Pisa with their partners Catherine and Mari for the 10th Pisa Marathon. Saturday. 2:30am into the car yawn! Off to Stanstead for 6:30 flight with Ryannair. The two hour flight went well although full, easy 2k bus trip to Pisa Station then a walk to the Marathon Expo. Mmmm food, bread and olive oil very nice. We picked up our Oh so tight race t-shirts, numbers, chips and final instruction book (all in Italian) Another short walk to the hotel, this city is not a busy mad place like Turin is seemed very quaint - things were looking good. The hotel chosen was 50 yards from the leaning tower quite a good location as that is where the race finished. Easy checking and yes the rooms were fine, both with a view of the leaning tower. Dump the bags and off for lunch and a tourist walk. The stadium where the coaches go from (Yes it's a point to point race) was about 5 mins away so that walk was tested to save time in the morning. Check the race details, lay out kit then off for more food wine and an early night.

Sunday.

Warm so just shorts and vest, not bad for 6am! Pack the pre race bag with energy gels grab a bun and walk the 5 mins to the stadium to meet the bus. After a while more runners turn up, quite a few then 3 bendy busses ok they were big but not that big. So it's squash on and off we go to Pontedera a very nice small town. Off the bus, Hmm 6 toilets! right lets go for a walk then, ahh that's better. The start was a very strange affair really over the top for such a small race, metal barriers, loads of staff, banners, gantry, mayor the lot. The start ticks round and we all line up in the correct areas me with the 3:15 pace group and Dave with the 4:00 group, wonder how bad the sun burn will be and bang off we go! The course takes in several villages on it's way back to Pisa and a beautiful tree lined avenue that seems to go on for ever. Good news it's mostly flat with a few gentle inclines. Every village made up most welcome, there were many spectators and several on cycles coming with us. All the roads were made safe by signs, police, marshalls and even big runs of metal barricades, this is the sort of thing you expect on London not on a race for 600 people - real quality. As you hit Pisa there less than 10k in the city which is still quite scenic with a couple of bridge crossings and loops before the finish straight. At the start of the finish straight are Catherine and Mari with the Toonie Flag tied to the railings, next to a Canadian Flag. A very welcome sight, shout hello then left turn and 200 yards to the finish. Job done. Grab a drink, designer medal (It is real quality, even signed by the artist) and grab a red wine now that's a nice touch.

I wandered back to the ladies then had a little sit with my legs up a wall to drain the blood back before going back to cheer Dave in. I finished 94th overall, 29th in class and First English Runner in 3:17:11.40 a seasons best and best time for several years. Dave finished 2nd English Runner in 4:16:05.75 and also enjoyed the red wine at the end. Off for a shower then pub time, beer was required.

Monday.

Up at a normal hour for breakfast served (or not) by a highly stressed maid, then find the bus to Lucca. After a while we get on the bus and the driver says he has no tickets so we have to buy them when we get to Lucca. Off we go through some beautiful countryside the sort of stuff you see on the property programmes. Lucca is a really easy going medieval walled city, no pressure and mostly car free. We had a great day walking about and relaxing. The famous quote of the day was Catherine with "Oh look a round square" we had found the famous Piazza Anfiteatro, somehow round square does not do it justice (Take a look on google). Back on the bus, this time we had to buy tickets!, then watch some very poor television before a long steady walk for lunch then pick up a bus to the airport. Ryannair were playing silly at the airport so we had to pay cash as we had bought web check-in tickets. Had we smeg, didn't have any problem checking it at the desk at Stanstead, not keen on this money making scam as I have told them. Anyway 10:40pm a full flight and back to blighty. On landing it was the turn of Stanstead to play silly buggers and it was 1:30 after landing that we saw the car. Despite these few normal travelling problems we all had a brilliant time in Pisa and were delighted to learn of a NEW Lucca Marathon in October 2009 that gives us time to save up soon for the book, we will be back to Pisa as it's such a nice city and a great Marathon but that will be in 2010.

The whole weekend with the 1p each way flights cost about £225 per person. You could do it for less with a further out hotel or fly back the night of the Marathon but I would say don't. Go and enjoy it.

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

17th May ~ White Peak Half & Full Marathon Thorpe, Derbyshire, Multi-Terrain

Host Club ~ Matlock AC.

Chris Smith of Sleaford Town Runners took part in the White Peak Marathon. Taking in the White Peak and Tissington trails it promised to be a beautiful if hard day out. The heat of the previous week had gone and 200 runners lined up in the very English drizzle trying to stop teeth chattering. Bang! and off we go uphill. Other than two large downhill, (the first at 24 miles), the whole race is uphill! This race really makes you suffer in new ways. Chris finished 75th out of 197 finishers in 3:40:43 and was quite happy with the time for the course. Back again? Hmm not sure yet but they do have a Half Marathon, talk of which Catherine Simpson ran that this year and finished 220th in 2:19:03 not her best time by far but for the course quite good!

Thanks to Chris for his report.

18th May ~ Deepings Bentley Charles 10k Deeping St James, Peterborough, Road.

Simon England was the lone flag bearer for our Club at the the Deepings Bentley Charles 10k. A flat course in cooler conditions than that of the previous week, helped Simon to a new personal best time of 40.18.

18th May ~ Sleaford 10k Screddington, Lincolnshire, Road.

With temperatures returning to normal for the time of year, the Sleaford 10k was to be a more comfortable affair for our Club members competing. Starting in the Village of Screddington just outside Sleaford, this rural, slightly undulating course takes in the village of Burton Pedwardine before returning to finish back at Screddington.

First of our Club runners to finish was new member Mark Sands who ran a great race in a Season's Best time of 34.46 5th overall. Dave (The Fox) Tilley returned to his usual pace after the heat of the Eye 10k, and pleased with 36.26. Fit again Nigel Wilcock back below 40 minutes in a SB time of 39.27, and in doing so completing the trio to win the men's Team Trophy. Keith Boseley and John Hodgkison recorded the same time both setting Personal Bests in 42.44. Another new Club member Greg Southern debut in Club colours was rewarded with an excellent PB time of 42.59. Dave Raynes one week on from the Pisa Marathon was more than content with 44.12 as was Simon Lunn again setting a new 10k PB of 44.37, with Paul Freemantle a second adrift in 44.38. Trevor Brown continues to enjoy his running, with his times reflecting this, finishing in 45.00. Stephen Brear with another marathon looming in the next few weeks pleased with his time of 48.25. First of our Ladies home Tracie Hough returning to form and fitness finishing in 49.14 and winning her vet category on her Birthday, Shaun (Roller) Louth happy with 54.12, as was Candy Louth suffering with a lingering cold but pleased with 54.49. Sheila Honeybun crossed smiling in 54.12, and just adrift of Shelia powering home was Denise Jackson in a SB of 54.18. Alistair Whitaker satisfied with another consistent time of 55.17 as was Pat Riches enjoying the short distance and winning her Vet category in 62.03. Together with Mark and Greg were Rhiannon Clarricoates & Yvonne Fox running for the first time in Club Colours. Rhiannon competing in her maiden race and pleased to finish in 66.03, just ahead of Yvonne in 68.48. Another enjoyable day and much appreciation expressed from all Club members competing to the Club Members who gave up their Sunday morning to come and support.

23rd May ~ LWAC 5k Race Series Race 1 Yarborough Leisure Centre, Lincoln, Road.

Host Club ~ Lincoln Wellington AC.

A year has flown by and the first race in the Lincoln Wellington AC 5k race series was upon us yet again. This evening race is a flat and fast 5k race which takes place at the Yarborough Leisure Centre in Lincoln, and well supported by local Clubs in and around the area. Chris Smith first of our Club runners to finish in 20.02, with Greg Southern rapidly improving not far adrift from Chris in 20.16. Paul Freemantle pleased with 20.28 as was Dave Taylor who finished in 20.57 a PB for this race series. Fiona Robertson set her marker for the series with 21.06 as did Simon Lunn 21.51 and Angie Harvey 22.11. Kerry Bradley in her first competitive race for the Club set a respectable time for the series of 26.20, with Mike Folland pulling up with an injury 400 yards from the finish and walking across the line in 26.49.

25th May ~ Claypole 7 Claypole, Newark, Nottinghamshire, Road.

This was the second running of this event offering either a 4 mile or 7 mile course starting from and finishing at the Five Bells Pub in Claypole, with registration at the Village Hall about 200 meters up the road. At present this is a low key event designed to raise money for the Air Ambulance which is always a good cause. There were only about fifty participants for both races, and all start at the same time on the road by the Pub. The short course is out and back to the Village of Dry Doddington turning around the Village Hall before heading back. The 7 mile course as I chose to run was again out to Dry Doddington, on a half mile towards the A1 then off towards Long Bennington on a grass and eventually hard core track before reaching tarmac again. A left turn to the Village of Westborough, left again on an undulating road back to Dry Doddington and then retrace the outbound course back to the Five Bells at Claypole. The course lacks a drink station at present and also I think a finishing memento, but it is a nice distance with the option of the short course, they plan to put the race on next year on the same Bank Holiday weekend, this would probably make a good local outing for our members. There is a good Bar-B-Q at the finish and an excellent Pub. In this years windy conditions I was pleased to finish in fifth place overall on the 7 mile course in a time of 51 mins 35 secs.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his report.

31st May ~ Puma Garburn Trail Races Village Lake District, Cumbria, Multi-Terrain.

Garburn 5.5k Sport Trail Race

I decided to do the shorter race as it meant we could dog sit between us as my race was later on in the day. I started at 3.30pm to do the 5.5k, We ran through the village then along the river bank, over a few stiles and through some gates. The route then followed tracks through meadows and woods to a very steep hill which I am afraid I walked part of as it was so hot. The best thing about going up has to be the down which although was very rocky was wonderful and I made quite a few places up. The finish could be seen from the opposite side of the river and with Chris doing the usual Toonie cheering, the 200m lap round the field went quickly and I finished in 41 mins sounds slow but I was more than happy with that, a lovely day, beautiful surroundings and a medal made for a very nice weekend.

Thanks to Catherine Simpson for her Report.

Garburn 24k Trail Race

To quote Runners World "The most scenic race in Britain" and "8th Best Race in the UK in 2007" That gives you a clue to the quality and style of this race. It's a hard event, this is not a jog or a normal half with a few hills it's a full on fell race with big hills the Garburn Pass and big stones that move a lot. The day was baking hot with no wind so that did not help much. We set off down

Stavley High Street which was flat then off up a hill then the road stopped and we were on trails...for the rest of the race. There were hills, footpaths, bridleways, washed out trails, field crossings and some scary stiles with big drops. Great fun though real classic stuff. You could stop at any point and take a picture for a calendar. The miles did not hurt neither did the speed (it was very fast down hill) but the hills took it out of me, I really must practice more – this is a prime example of training for a specific event. One of the strangest things was that Emmerdale's Bob Hope beat me! but as he is well sub 3 for a Marathon and is clearly built for hills I can live with this. We had a good chat after the race and strangely he is a very nice bloke. The winner finished in 1:25:41 how I have no idea! I managed 2:11:42 giving me 97th place out of 437 finishers quite happy to be that far up among the fell runners.

Thanks to Chris for his Report.

1st June ~ Needles XC Marathon Isle of Wight, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ West Wight Road Runners.

My toughest Cross Country Marathon ever, but I completed it my 7th Marathon so far. Anyway enough about my celebration of my full Marathons? This was a gruelling day for me, I woke at 3am to hear the birds singing at Portsmouth ready to catch the ferry to Fishbourne and then the bus to Newport. Lastly Freshwater where the Needles XC Full Marathon and Half started at the Mountbatten Rooms, Sport Centre. Situated in the middle of the lovely scenery of Freshwater and the sights of the Needles. Anyway 10am with both races starting at the same time with 50 competitors and less for the half. This is a good run, the temperature was beating down on us at a warm 23c but in the shade it was cool. With difficult paths to avoid such as 10 stiles and 5 gates to open plus a muddy wood and sand to contend with, however we muddled through to the supporting cheers which kept us going. Well organised with five checkpoints which we had to follow, including water stations offering sweets and ice cubes to keep us going with the long winding difficult course. This was a gem of a run and the most challenging cross country Marathon I have ever completed, which I enjoyed and would do it again. Well Done West Wight Roadrunners. Stephens finishing time was 6:00:22.

Thanks to Stephen Brear for his Report.

1st June ~ Whipsnade Zoo Stampede nr Dunstable, Bedfordshire, Zoo Grounds, Road.

Supported by ~ Dunstable Road Runners.

Whipsnade Zoo provided an unusual setting for an enjoyable 10k race. Hosted at Whipsnade Zoo by Dunstable Road Runners this race was popular with several hundred entries, despite the early 9.30am starting time. The race takes place over a 3 lap course around the main service road of the zoo the lap having a slight downhill gradient with a slight climb back up for about half way. Despite the numbers the course did not feel too crowded and encouraged by the downward gradient I soon settled in to a quick pace. It made a change to be running whilst looking at Rhinos and Zebras. Having been fooled by the downhill sections I soon regretted my early pace and by lap 3 was concentrating on trying to make the finish in my target time of less than 45 minutes, which unfortunately just eluded me having finished in 45:07 I would have happily swapped my finishers medal for 8 seconds off my time. However my time was soon forgotten as I enjoyed my free entry to the zoo which was available to all runners, with a family picnic.

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his Report.

1st June ~ Woodhall Spa 10k Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, Road.

Overcast and fresh for the start of this year's 10k race, in complete contrast to the warm temperatures of the previous year. This race grows with each year with over 900 finishers to this year's race. Chip timing was introduced to improve the results service due to the increased number of competitors. Another popular race for our membership with good performances throughout littered with Personal and Season's Best times. Mark Sands continues his fine form going quicker than last year finishing 8th overall in a superb time of 34.29 SB. Dave Tilley not far adrift in 15th again in a quick time of 36.03 SB, as was Nigel Wilcock's time of 38.38 SB. Greg Southern impressed in reducing his PB to 41.38 as did John Hodgkinson 41.46. Simon England struggling with stomach cramps crossed in 42.29 with Paul Freemantle improving, finishing in 42.36 a SB. Keith Boseley just off his pace of late in 43.36, not so Dave Raynes continuing to impress in 43.45 SB as did Fiona Robertson delighted with 43.52 PB. Sue Evans just adrift of Fiona pleased with 44.27 SB. Trevor Brown pulled up with a pulled hamstring before the line but managed to finish in 45.50. Good to see Steve Roulston running and posting a time of 47.10 as it was Danielle La Roche in her first race for our Club finishing in an excellent PB time of 47.54. Robert Hodgson 48.04 SB, Candy Louth 51.31 and Caz Flannigan 51.31 SB all satisfied with their times. David Nelson first race for our Club finished looking relaxed in 51.50 PB as could be said of Denise Jackson 53.23 SB and Kerry Bradley 53.51 PB. Alistair Whitaker posted a consistent time of 56.16, with a delighted Rhiannon Clarricoates taking 10 mins off her 2 week old PB finishing in 56.05 with Shaun Louth 56.07. Jim Wood set his PB in his first race for our Club and enjoyed the occasion finishing with a Pat Riches SB together in 1.00.41. Lea Addelee also 1.00.41 a SB, with Julie Porter completing the Club member's home finishing in 1.01.06 a SB.

4th June ~ Ropsley 6 nr Grantham, Road

Host Club ~ Ropsley Road Runners.

A warm summers evening saw a good turnout of Club members despite many running at Woodhall Spa three days earlier. It was also a good turnout of competitors for this local race, with entry numbers up from the previous year. A challenging course for this 6 mile road race with plenty of uphill sections most notably at the start! None the less some excellent performances and times from our Club members.

Nigel Wilcock 38.38, Chris Smith 38.48, Paul Freemantle 41.56, Keith Boseley 42.34, Dave Raynes 42.55 Stephen Roulston 44.36, Angie Harvey 44.39, Danielle La Roche 47.13, Candy Louth 51.36, Alistair Whitaker 55.08, Catherine Simpson 58.03, Julie Porter 59.56, Pat Riches 59.56, Shaun Louth 59.56, Carolyn Crocker 61.00 & Julie Stapleton 61.00.

6th June ~ Notts 10 Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, Road
Host Club ~ Notts AC.

Chris Smith finished in 61st position in 66mins 29 secs. Chris was 26th V40 so still no hope of winning anything. There were 259 finishers. Quite happy with the time but would have been a little quicker without the downpour. The race was very fast and flat with bucket loads of rain on the first 4 mile lap. There was just one lady in front of me at the finish, I made a point of running down the ladies! I very much look forward to being back at Holme Pierrepont for the 10k, the first race in the Notts 4 race series in a few weeks time.

Thanks to Chris for his Report.

8th June ~Seabank Marathon Boston to Skegness, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Boston was the start of the 31st running of the Boston to Skegness Seabank Marathon. This is physically and mentally challenging race run this year under blue skies and mid twenties temperatures. Six Club members would put themselves on the line to take on this arduous multi-terrain course over 26 miles. The finish on the seafront at Skegness was to be a welcome sight for all runners competing with the temperature rising steadily from the 9.00am start time. Dave Tilley would have a groundhog day finishing 2nd in the race for the 2nd year running in a superb time of 3.08. Mark Sands though struggling dug deep to finish 4th in 3.30. Alex Hetherington rose to the challenge of this endurance event producing one of her most satisfying races to date finishing 1st lady in a fantastic time of 3.52 and 10th overall in the race. Dave Taylor over his preferred terrain delighted to finish under 4 hours in 3.56. Dave Raynes looking relax and comfortable crossing the line in 4.10. Mick Dakin far from race fit after a recent injury competed and finished the race in 4.16, keeping up his record as the only person to compete in all 31 Seabank Marathons.

15th June ~ Abbey 10k Ramsey Cambridgeshire, Multi-Terrain
Host Club ~ Ramsey Road Runners.

Simon England once again made the solo journey south representing our Club, to Cambridgeshire for this revised multi-terrain race with 75% on road. Having struggled with stomach cramps in recent races Simon had rested for a couple of weeks, so this was to be a steady race. 322 runners finished with Simon a creditable 56th in a time of 42.00.

15th June ~ Ranby 10k Ranby, nr Retford, Nottinghamshire, Road
Host Club ~ Ranby Prison Running Club.

Overcast and heavy downpours kept most of this year's competitors waiting in their cars until the rain relented prior to the start of this year's race. Possibly the last running of this event due to the organisers moving to pastures new. Despite the early evening start time of 18.15, enough runners avoided the temptation of a lunch time Sunday roast to compete in this mainly road race 10k. Nigel Wilcock in fine form in recent races struggled to maintain his pace on the one mile off road section, however Chris Smith didn't and would go on to finish in a Season's Best 10k time of 39.46, with Nigel following Chris across the line in 40.08. Paul Freemantle satisfied with 43.29, with Candy Louth storming home to a new Personal Best time of 49.58. Alistair Whitaker also delighted in setting a new PB finishing in 54.57. Catherine Simpson recorded another fine race breaking the hour in 59.34, with Pat Riches fresh from holiday winning her Vet Category in 1.02.10.

21st June ~ Framlingham Half Marathon Framlingham, Suffolk, Road.

Dave Tilley travelled to Framlingham in Suffolk to take part in the Framlingham Half Marathon. A three lap course on road did not affect Dave posting another fine time of 1.22.26, third in the race overall

22nd June ~ Three Lakes Classic 15 Rother Valley Country Park, Killamarsh, Sheffield, Multi-Terrain
Host Club ~ Killamarsh Kestrels Running Club.

A gusting warm wind throughout this 15 mile multi-terrain race, only added to the challenge of this year's race for our Club members competing. Killamarsh Kestrels Running Club the organisers of the race changed the route slightly from last year, though the majority of the course including the hills remained unchanged. Another good turn out with the majority of competitors competing in Club colours, were faced with the decision of trail or road training shoes after a mainly dry week however

compounding their choice was prolonged rain the night before. Paul Freemantle back to his favoured longer distance enjoyed the course, comfortably finishing in 2.00.20. Dave Taylor off the pace this weekend, though still finishing in a creditable time of 2.14.54, as was Dave Raynes time of 2.16.00 just adrift of Dave Taylor. Candy Louth would rue her choice of trail shoes, having to stop for a plaster mid-race with a badly blistered heel, and crossed the line accompanied throughout the race by Caz Flannigan in a time of 2.36.45.

24th June ~ Holme Pierrepont 10k National Watersports Centre, Nottingham, Road.

Host Club ~ Holme Pierrepont Running Club.

The first race in the Nottingham Grand Prix series of 4 races over two weeks. For once HP was dry (very rare this) just a little wind and overcast so good conditions. The course is one large lap of the lake followed by a smaller lap. The start was fast and tight, someone managed to elbow me in the chest this took a couple of miles to get over. I started at about 3:35 pace so too fast and soon relaxed in to 3:55 pace as the race went on and the long run into the wind took effect I slowed and missed my sub 40 target finishing in 41:20. Not too bad as just a few days before I was taking part in a Level 2 coaching course involving Triple Jump, Shop and Sprinting all of which I have not done for 20+ years Ouch! Thursdays race is an off road 5k at Woollaton Hall, I seem to remember that has hills, mud and hurt last year!

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

25th June ~ LWAC 5k Race Series Race 2 Yarborough Leisure Centre, Lincoln, Road.

Host Club ~ Lincoln Wellington AC.

Race two of this excellent 5k series hosted by LWAC, and another good turnout of largely Club based runners. Warm breezy weather was present for this 5k race at the Yarborough Leisure Centre, Lincoln, for the 19.30 start time. There is no time to settle once the gun goes off, fast and furious for the three and a half lap course. Simon England returning to fitness was delighted with his pacy time of 19.29, with a consistent Chris Smith once again under 20 minutes in 19.52. John Hodgkinson comfortable crossing the line in 20.28 also can be said of Angie Harvey 22.02, 2nd in her Vet Category. With Mike Folland pleased to complete an injury free run in 23.16. In the under 15 boy's 3k race, Matthew Smith racing in Grantham AC Club colours stormed home in first place in an impressive time of 11.00.

29th June ~ Humber Bridge Half Marathon Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber, Road.

The Humber Bridge spans a wealth of facts and figures and makes for an impressive view as you approach the Humber estuary. However it was to race over rather than the history lesson that enticed our Club members to the outskirts of Hull. Deceptively warm sunshine through broken clouds throughout the race caught many out and they would rue the offer of free sun cream prior to the race from the race organisers. Scenic views from the bridge which you crossed twice, challenging inclines and a beast of a hill appropriately named by one competitor as 'Cardiac hill' at mile nine made for an eventful race! Mark Sands and Dave Tilley continue to set impressive times at all distances regardless of the conditions. Mark would edge out Dave finishing in an excellent 17th position in 1.20.28 with Dave 24th again in an excellent time of 1.22.46. Chris Smith happy with 1.33.26 as was Simon England setting a new Personal Best of 1.35.58, Keith Boseley also set a new PB of 1.42.43 with another consistent time for Dave Raynes of 1.46.28. Candy Louth and Mick Dakin comfortably finishing in a time of 1.58.35. A delighted Denise Jackson in her first Half Marathon finished in 2.17.59, with Catherine Simpson crossing the finish in 2.22.06. Equally thrilled to finish her first Half Marathon was Carolyn Crocker crossing the line in 2.25.47. Struggling on an off day was Julie Stapleton who would dig deep to finish with Paul Freemantle in 2.26.00.

1st July ~Holme Pierrepont Series Race 3 Rushcliffe Country Park, Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Holme Pierrepont Running Club.

The third race in the Nottingham series was a 4 miler. A strange distance that seemed longer than I remembered from last year. Based at a country park the course was gravel paths, gentle hills and grass thankfully dry and warm this year! I set off a little quick and suffered in the third mile but still managed to shave 2 mins off my 2007 time finishing in 26:34 (6:38.5 min/mile) my watch made it long at 6:31 min/mile (so did my legs) So far I am 75/283 race 1, 71/235 race 2, 56/239 race 3 with just Thursdays 5m to go, good I'm worn out!

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

3rd July ~ Holme Pierrepont Series Race 4 Colwick Park lakes, Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Holme Pierrepont Running Club.

A hot and sunny start for the last race in the Grand Prix series. The 5 mile race runs round parkland near Nottingham racecourse. A fast nearly flat course on gravel and cinder paths. My garmin stopped working just before the start, you have to charge them up you know! so I ran "blind" and it made a nice change and in no way slowed me down.

I finished 61st in 33:02 (sure the clock said 33:00 so 6:36min/mile) there were 253 finishers (male) In the series I came 45th Male in a total time of 2:02:18 with just 3 ladies in front of me. An improvement on last year despite my V40 status, the series winner was a V40 but I won't be trying to get to that speed (10k in 33 mins Ha!) Despite missing 2 club nights I will be back next year for the most brilliant set of races.

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

6th July ~ Thurlby 10k Thurlby, near Bourne, Lincolnshire, Road.

Three Club Members attended the Thurlby village 10k road race which started and finished at the village school and community centre. The course wound its way around the village and then up hill and into open countryside on minor roads gently undulating through local villages. We were lucky with the weather and the rain stayed away until the walk back to the car. Chris Smith was first home with 42.28 then came Mick Dakin in 45.26 and Catherine Simpson 62.54.

Thanks to Catherine for her report.

10th July ~Whissendine 6 Mile Whissendine, Oakham, Rutland, Road.

Host Club ~ Rutland Running Club.

Chris Smith and Catherine Simpson competed in the Whissendine 6 mile on Thursday evening. The race starts at the top of the village, downhill and out the other side straight back up hill again. The almost traffic free course meanders through the chocolate box pretty villages of Leicestershire and Rutland and after a very undulating 5 miles the last mile is downhill back into the village. We were presented with Beer glasses and a bottle of the local brew to go in it. It was a very good atmosphere with plenty of food and drink on the village green. Chris 42.18 and Catherine 59.11.

Thanks to Catherine for her Report.

11th July ~ Branston Dash Branston, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Lincoln & District Runners

A year on and a new 5 mile course for 2008, still a multi-terrain affair and raining once again! A good turn out of competitors despite the heavy rain that fell over the course of the afternoon and up to the 7.30pm start time. The rain did however abate for the majority of the race. An excellent course comprising of gradual inclines throughout the race, though there was to be a nice speedy down hill section leading to the finish. Simon England running into some excellent form produced a fine run finishing 7th in a time of 31.59. Chris Smith would edge out team mate Greg Southern to the finish in 33.48 with Greg crossing in 34.06. Keith Boseley produced a strong run and finished in 35.37 winning his Vet Category, with Paul Freemantle 36.01. Sue Evans is showing good form winning her Vet Category with 36.31, also having a fine race Trevor Brown finishing in 36.37. Angie Harvey finished in 39.05, Simon Lunn 39.19, Stephen Brear 41.05, Candy Louth 41.08, Alistair Whitaker 45.53 and Catherine Simpson showing no signs of tiring after recent races with 48.38. Completing our team of runners Julie Stapleton and Carolyn Crocker happy with their time of 54.49 as was Pat Riches fresh from holiday 54.54. .

13th July ~ Notfast 10k Newark, Nottinghamshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Notfast Running Club.

A good turnout for Notfast with Chris Smith, Catherine Simpson, Fiona Robertson, Nigel Wilcock, Dave Tilley, Dave Raynes, Mick Dakin, Mark Sands and Simon England all eager to run the fairly flat 10k from Newark Rugby Club. The weather turned warm which was favourable for some but not all as the Athsma sufferers found out. Only one major hill in this one and once you get to Kelham bridge you can see the Rugby posts in the distance which is about a mile to go. The finish is a bit cruel as you run on fairly long grass round the field and it saps the last of the energy in tired legs. Mark Sands set another impressive time of 34.21 7th overall, Dave the Fox Tilley 16th, posting a quick time also of 37.08. Simon England nudges closer to a sub 40 10k time with a new PB of 40.13, with Nigel Wilcock 40.57 and Chris Smith 42.34. Mick Dakin 45.10 and Dave Raynes 45.40 both satisfied with their times. Fiona celebrating her birthday elected to run with Catherine and they came in together at 62.35. A decent goody bag with drinks, food bar, pen and socks completed a very nice mornings racing.

Thanks to Catherine for her Report.

20th July ~ Sherwood Pines 10k Sherwood Pines, Clipstone Forest, Nottinghamshire, Multi-Terrain.

Four Town Runners travelled the short distance to the Sherwood Pines 10k Trail Race deep in the Nottinghamshire countryside. This was the second running of this race and the numbers have grown to over 400 competitors. We assembled for the start in the centre of Sherwood Forest and set off on the hilly course on the beautiful well maintained trails. Chris Smith was first home in 41.47 followed by Dave Raynes in 45.28 Catherine Simpson 1.01 and Pat Riches 1.04. The weather stayed fine and we finished a very pleasant day with a picnic. Thanks also to Mari for her support on the day.

Thanks to Catherine Simpson for her Report.

26th July ~ Heckington 10 Heckington, Lincolnshire, Road
Host Club ~ Sleaford Town Runners.

The Heckington 10 is the oldest 10 mile road race in the East Midlands with the first race held in 1965. Fitting then that for such an established race that this year a much increased field of runners would compete over this mainly flat fast course. With Club members and families marshalling combined with members competing, it made for a great team atmosphere. At the 11 o'clock start time the sun was blistering hot and for some runners on this two lap mainly rural course the heat would restrict their times. Not so Mark Sands who produced a scorching run in a time of 58.36 third in the race. Dave Tilley 11th also strong in the heat 1.03.01. Simon England 23rd capping a fine month of running with a PB time of 1.08.17, Nigel Wilcock 24th seconds behind Simon in 1.08.23. Chris Smith 1.11.32, Greg Southern racing for the first time over this distance set a maiden PB of 1.14.17. Caz Flannigan produced an excellent PB time of 1.18.01, Mick Dakin 1.18.56, Keith Boseley satisfied with a PB time 1.19.59. Fiona Robertson and Angie Harvey crossed together in 1.21.19 winning for the Club the inaugural Gente Bella Ladies Team Cup. Tracie Hough hung on after a strong start to finish in 1.21.47 with new Club member's Tim Ketton 1.24.09 and Beth Wilmot 1.24.12 racing for the first time over the distance. Simon Lunn 1.24.35, Stephen Brear 1.24.57 with Karen Gwynne completing our team of runners with 1.52.14. Big thank you to all Club members and their families who despite the heat helped to make the event the success it was, not forgetting our Heckington 10 coordinator Trevor Brown who worked tirelessly organising this year's race.

30th July ~ LWAC 5k Race Series Race 3 Yarborough Leisure Centre, Lincoln, Road.
Host Club ~ Lincoln Wellington AC.

Simon England, Fiona Robertson and Chris Smith shrugged off their efforts after the heat of Heckington the previous Saturday to compete in race three of this four race 5k series. Simon England produced his best run to date over this distance to PB with an excellent time of 19.10, Mr Consistent Chris Smith once again under 20 mins in 19.56, with Fiona Robertson finishing in 21.28.

2nd August ~ Burton Beer Bash 5 Burton le Coggles, Grantham, Lincolnshire, Road.

This 5 mile race starting from the PJ'S Pie pub is the second running of this race, last year the race had to be diverted to road only due to the very wet conditions across the fields. This year however the course was able to resort to its original route, being the first two and a half miles off road and the second two and a half miles on tarmac. 50 runners turned up for this fairly low key event and despite a heavy downpour at the start conditions under foot were quite good, the off road section not being much slower than the tarmac section due to the last half being quite undulating. I was pleased to finish in eleventh position overall with a time of 36mins 22 secs to receive my pint glass to take into the pub and as part of the finishers prize to be duly filled with a beverage of your choice. Stephen Brear ran very well to finish just under 40 minutes just as the heavy rain returned to soak us all once again. Excellent little race, good fun for a Saturday morning I hope maybe a few more toonies might manage the trip for next years race, well worth the effort.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his Report.

9th Aug ~ Bassingham Bash 5 Mile Bassingham, Lincolnshire, Road.

Four Sleaford Town Runners travelled to Bassingham near Lincoln to run in the Bassingham 5 mile road race which is organised by the local cricket club and assisted by Lincoln and district runners. It is a very fast and flat course, almost traffic free ,starting and finishing at Bassingham village Gala. Heavy rain greeted us at the start but abated soon afterwards creating perfect conditions for good times. Chris Smith was first home for STR in 31.44 followed by Dave Raynes 34.31 Catherine Simpson came in at 46.58 a PB also winning the FV50 prize Pat Riches completed the team in 48.31.

Thanks to Catherine for her report.

10th Aug ~ Newark Half Marathon Newark, Nottinghamshire, Road.

Club members travelled to Newark for the 27th running of the Newark Half Marathon. This is a mainly flat, town and rural course, starting and finishing in the historic centre of Newark-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire. Anna Berrill produced a consistent run to finish in a pacy time of 1.30.15, Chris Smith just adrift of Anna would cross in 1.30.53. Alex Hetherington would enjoy the company of fellow Club Members Mike Folland and Dave Taylor for the majority of the race finishing in 1.47.02, Mike would finish a couple of minutes adrift from Alex in 1.48.26 with Dave 1.50.23. Kerry Bradley running her first Half Marathon marked up a creditable time of 2.07.12 and completing our Club members running was an off key Alistair Whitaker who dug deep to finish in 2.36.25.

16th Aug ~ Race the Train Tywyn, Wales, Multi-Terrain.

Race the train – exactly what it says in the title – a race against a steam train over 14 miles on terrain which is slightly more difficult than The Belvoir Challenge on a bad day. Dave Tilley, Mark Sands and Mick Dakin travelled to take up the challenge. In order to beat the train, a time below 1 hour 45 mins had to be achieved. Three great efforts on a very difficult course resulted in

times of 1 hour 36 mins for Dave (48th), 1 hour 40 mins for Mark (93rd) and 2 hours 5 mins for Mick (445th). It was a great race which was well marshalled, with plenty of drinks stations. A good time was had by all. Just a pity about the weather!

Thanks to the Fox for his Report.

25th Aug ~Grimsthorpe Castle 10k Grimsthorpe Castle Estate, Bourne, Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

This popular Bank Holiday race is another multi-terrain affair which attracted a contingent from our Club. Dave Tilley on his favoured terrain produced an excellent run finishing 16th overall winning his Vet Category in 38.24. Chris Smith 44.28 was to be followed in by Trevor Brown, who now injury free is producing some strong results, finishing in 45.59. Candy Louth with a consistent time of 55.41, Lea Addlesee pleased with 1.02.37, Catherine Simpson 1.04.49 with Shaun Louth for company 1.04.56. Yvonne Fox and Clare Bergner started together only for Clare to have an awkward fall, determined to continue with Yvonne waiting, they would finish with Yvonne crossing in 1.15.41 and Clare 1.16.12.

27th Aug ~ LWAC 5k Race Series Race 4 Yarborough Leisure Centre, Lincoln, Road.

Host Club ~ Lincoln Wellington AC.

Despite the overcast humid conditions a good turnout from Local Clubs would compete for positions in the overall series result. Chris Smith produced his best run of the Series with a strong finish of 19.23, Greg Southern 20.48 with Fiona Robertson enjoying a steady run 21.28. Paul Freemantle 22.12, Alex Hetherington soon to follow Paul across the line 22.27, Mike Folland 22.54 with Angie Harvey 23.13 completing our Club members competing. Fiona and Angie would receive a prize for coming 2nd and 3rd in her Vet Category respectfully in the race series overall.

30th Aug ~ Irnham Bash 5 Mile Irnham, South Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Dave Raynes made the solo journey to represent our Club in the Irnham Beer Bash 5. This rural five mile undulating multi-terrain race starts and finishes at the Griffin Inn in Irnham South Lincolnshire. Dave enjoyed the race finishing sixth overall in 36.31.

31st Aug ~ Chesterfield Spire 10 Chesterfield, Derbyshire, Road.

Host Club ~ North Derbyshire Running Club.

This is one of the more challenging 10 mile races on the racing circuit with hills that climb to over 300 metres above sea level. Despite those calf burning hills a large field of runners turned out to compete. Chris Smith relishing the challenge crossed in a satisfying time of 1.11.45, Paul Freemantle content with 1.18.53, Dave Raynes with no signs of tiredness from the previous days racing crossed in 1.22.00. Alex Hetherington seconds adrift in 1.22.02. Angie Harvey was pleased with 1.22.54 as was Catherine Simpson looking strong as she crossed the finish in 1.46.51.

6th September ~ Lincs Wolds Tough 10 Rothwell, Lincolnshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Wolds Veteran Runners Club.

The 26th running of this 10 mile event through the undulating roads of the Lincolnshire Wolds near to Caistor on Saturday 6th September, a very wet start with some heavy showers on route. A hill for every mile of this very well organised event, makes for an interesting run, including an uphill start. A good field of 230 took to the roads around the very scenic course before arriving back at the pub to finish. I was pleased with my finishing time of 1hr 18mins 52 secs, to receive a long sleeve t-shirt plus a plate of sausage and chips served to every finisher, which was a great achievement from the staff at the Blacksmiths Arms. A great race and one I would highly recommend to our members for next year.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his Report.

7th Sept ~ Bupa Great Yorkshire Run 10k Sheffield, Yorkshire, Road.

Samantha Keating travelled to Sheffield in Yorkshire to compete in this 10k race, part of the Bupa race series. The route takes you through the heart of Sheffield's vibrant city centre which Samantha would complete in a time of 1.15.36.Road

7th Sept ~ Major Stone Half Marathon Beverley & Driffild, just north of Hull, Road.

Host Club ~ East Hull Harriers.

On Sunday 7th September Chris Smith & Simon Lunn made the trip across the Humber Bridge to run the "Major Stone Half Marathon" at Lockington near Beverley. This well organised run takes place from the the centre of the village around an undulating route around the village .Despite parts of the course being ankle deep in water the previous day, the expected rain held off and sunny and warm conditions greeted the runners. Chris aiming for a sub 1:30 time was please to cross the line in 1:30:38. Simon aiming for 1:45 was a little disappointed to cross the line in 1:53:10.

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his report.

14th Sept ~ Mablethorpe Half Marathon Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire, Road.

Dave Tilley produced another fantastic run finishing in an impressive time of 3.03.30, 7th overall.. In the Half Marathon Lea Addlesee produced an equally impressive run setting a new personal best time of 2.05.45.

14th Sept ~ Nottingham Half Marathon Nottingham, Road.

For the third year in succession this ever growing City half Marathon would be competed over a new course. The flat PB potential course of yester year has long been swallowed up in favour of a more scenic route, never taking you much beyond the confines of the City. With hills and inclines a plenty the course is now as challenging as the Humber Bridge and Worksop Half Marathons. That said thousands of runners travel to compete in what has become one of the Countries largest Half Marathons. Overcast and cool for the 10 o'clock start would give way to warm sunshine for the majority of the runners as they crossed the finish line. Nigel Wilcock competing again after a recent injury produced a fine run finishing in 1.30.51, just ahead of the chasing Chris Smith 1.31.22. Alex Hetherington seemly relaxed as she crossed the line in 1.41.03, Angie Harvey pleased with 1.42.48 as was Paul Freemantle 1.43.04. Catherine Simpson 2.19.34 and Shaun Louth 2.19.52 were both content with their times. Rachel Howard and Patsy Hunt competing in their maiden Half Marathons would be supported by Julie Porter competing in her 25th Half Marathon, Pat Riches, Sinead and Barbara Johnson for the duration of the race. Patsy and Rachel were thrilled to finish with their teammates in 2.32.42. Alistair Whitaker after a solid start would be forced to pull out of the race at six miles with calf problems.

21st Sept ~ Anglesey Marathon Anglesey, Wales, Road.

Stephen Brear travelled to Anglesey to compete in what turned out to be warm conditions with temperatures reaching up to 18c. Struggling a little in the warm temperatures Stephen dug deep to record a finishing time of 5.11.24, some four minutes off last year's time.

21st Sept ~ Ponton Plod Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

The third running of this cross country challenge offering two courses of either 17 miles or 27 miles, from Great Ponton on the A1 near Grantham covering some excellent countryside through Buchminster, Croxton Kerial, Denton Harlaxton and finally back to Ponton. It was a wonderful day weather wise on Sunday 21st September with temperature climbing to 21 degrees in bright sunshine, and no breeze at all, this made for a tough race, but at least the ground conditions were in our favour being quite dry for the whole of the race. I manage to keep Dave Taylor in sight for almost 10 of the 27 miles, but he set him self a good pace and gradually pulled away out of sight before the first check point at Croxton Kerrial. Dave ran on well in the second half of the race maintaining his pace and finished in an excellent time of 4hrs 59 mins. I ran well enough to the last check point at Wyville but struggled to keep my pace going over the last 4 miles, but still pleased with my 5 hours 14 mins in seventh position overall, this being a bit of a landmark for me as this was my 180th full marathon. Full distance clocked by Dave Taylor on his garmin was 27.8 miles.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his Report.

17 miles (Ha 20) results:

Lets sum it up... "Follow those guys they have done the race for 3 years"... "I don't remember this bit"... "We are in Skillington, that's not on our course it's on the 26!!" Oh Dear, about face. "Hello Chris" said Dave Raynes and Norman, well no they didn't actually but it was nice to amuse the 26 mile runners by going the wrong way on their course. At this point Dave & Mark decided to go "On a mission" to blast past the runners that had got ahead while we took our 3 mile detour. I on the other hand thought what a nice day it was for a jog and relaxed. The food stations were great with cakes and coffee on hand, the day was perfect if a little hot at times. Soup and pudding at the finish was very welcome and a nice certificate for my collection. A very good day out I would say above many other trail races that I have done. Not as hard as Belvoir Challenge, not as quick as Caythorpe Canter but nicer than both in its own way. I will try to be back next year and I have been assured they will have extra big markers so even us Toonies can't miss them. 4th Dave Tilley 2.37, 5th Mark Sands 2.37 & 18th Chris Smith 3.04.

Thanks to Chris Smith for his Report.

28th Sept ~ Turin Half Marathon Turin, Italy, Road.

Musings of the Red, White & Green variety. - Or "The Italian Job 2 (Without Americans who can't drive minis)"
On our second Italian trip of the year we went to Turin in the north for the Half Marathon, we had been there a couple of years before on a shopping trip but it was in winter then so Catherine was not on form, cold does that
Friday we awoke early, very early! Well 2am for the airport run to Stansted, brilliant hardly any cars. Parking was at the Pink Elephant as normal so totally smooth. Into the airport, find Ryanair, (well the flight times were right and so was the cost!), no ques? Hmmm have we got the wrong desk? No checked in in 2mins. Security had about 5 people in front of us so just time to take jackets

of and within 5mins of walking into the airport we were in the Departure Lounge. Very relaxed and happy. The flight was 15 mins late, not bad as the night before the air traffic computers had been off and when we went to bed we didn't know if we would have a flight. Flight was easy and arrivals at Turin was simple, the bag was 1st off and we were on a bus to the city,(40 min trip), just 10 mins of hitting tarmac.

The hotel as planned was 200m from the bus/train station. We were surprised by the elegant frontage of the hotel and quickly double checked the name! Checkin was simple and after asking for a room with a bath it seems we were upgraded to a junior suite or something similar, well it had everything even a drinks trolley, balcony and a bureau and two toilets so the internet wins again as do Best Western and Hotel Genio. After a rest we walk down to the race registration area and can't find it! We know we are a day early but expected some sign, anyway a very grand park that we had missed on our previous trip. Round town we walk for many miles soaking up the sun at relaxed atmosphere, it is cultural week and the whole city is out walking about, shopping and buying chocolates. Ask Catherine about the drinking chocolate that you can stand a spoon up in oh yes and the custard filled doughnuts, I can give detailed coffee reviews if required.

Saturday, after a huge breakfast, we went to register and found a sign it was next to inflatable's, barriers and a medieval castle so not easy to miss, they had been very busy although we suspect the castle was already there. Registration was in the castle and was very simple, we got our event Running Vests and a huge goody bag, it had to be huge it had the normal food and water but also a 24 pack of pocket tissue packs and 100 serviettes ok strange! Off round town followed in the evening by a very expensive meal at the next door hotel, you could not get fat on the food but it was pure quality.

Sunday race day, as breakfast starts at 7 and the race is not till 9:30 it's time to fill up and this time I get a proper cappuccino so start the day as I mean to go on. We jog down to the race start for 8:45 so have plenty of time to jog about with the locals. They finally start to line up with just 10 mins to the gun. In the pen I am too far back and Catherine too far forward but never mind that would sort itself out. A few words and a minutes silence, probably not for Paul Newman , Bang! off we go.

The first k was uphill so I managed to get through some of the pack but for the first few miles I was just fun running doing over 7 min miles, I picked up the pace when we got about 4k in, it was marked in k. There were only 3 drink stations but very well done with water, energy drink and sponges all well spaced out and well staffed. I went faster after my energy gel at about 11k. The last 3k were through the huge park and finished on a small but cruel uphill , ok there was about 400m down after the hill and I zapped a few runners there also as is my way. I crossed the line in 1:31:33 behind my 1:30 target but just what I have been doing and I was ready to run back to find Catherine, well after a drink and some food. I finally got to run back to meet Catherine and had a nice chat with a local who only spoke German and Italian so that was fun! But we had a laugh . When Catherine came along she was suffering so I had to keep out of reach when encouraging her! We had our photo taken on the run, she missed this though so I don't hold out hopes for the photo . With a finishing spurt she managed the final hill and picked off one lady in the final yards clocking 2:19 . We posed together for photos at the end . I had finished 2nd English and 3rd non-Italian, 308th and 88th in class and Catherine was 1st English Lady and 15th in class. The medals were worth holding up for the photos a special cast medal with the half cherry logo. Sleep food showers and drinks ensued. Tea was light food at the English theme pub that we had found near the hotel, well they served pints!, (And don't mention football), none of the 200ml measures for me after a race.

Monday we were up at 6:30 to leave the hotel by 7 for the bus to the airport, all went like clockwork even though Catherine got excited when I was still drinking espresso when the bus arrived . We walked straight into the terminal up to the empty Ryanair desk and yes again we were checked in within 2 mins , very strange but true, straight through security and off for more coffee and breakfast followed by chocolate shopping. The flight back was perfect, we think the pilot was training for the RAF as he was really on a mission. Back home to plan our next excursion on "AeroSmith", as Catherine won't let me have a plane I think it could well be Ryanair again. Ideas include....well lets just say it's Italy and when just depends on flight and hotel prices, the only race I'm not sure about is the "Maratonina Di Natale" which is Turin's Christmas Marathon on 21st December apparently it's really cold. If anyone is looking to travel for a Half Marathon this is the one and for a Full Marathon it's Pisa.

Thanks to Chris for his report.

28th Sept ~West Pinchbeck 10k West Pinchbeck, Spalding, Lincolnshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Spalding Triathlon Club.

Another fine day for this flat fast 10k drew a competitive field of runners to West Pinchbeck near Spalding. A nice turnout of our Club members with a number making their competitive debut in Club colours. Our Club Member of the month Mark Sands produced one of his best 10k races of the year finishing only 12 seconds behind the race winner finishing 2nd in 33.59. Simon England breezed under 40 minutes for the first time in a new PB time 39.33, the ever improving Greg Southern also sub 40 in an equally quick time of 39.52. John Hodgkinson ran well finishing in 42.04, Trevor Brown in a seasons best time of 44.09, just adrift of Trevor Mick Dakin with little running of late satisfied with 44.12 as was Paul Freemantle 44.42. Angie Harvey 46.24 winning her vet category in the process. A nervous Aune Turkson-Jones prior to the start was delighted with 52.45 in her first race for our Club, Lea Addelee comfortably under his target time of one hour and pleased to finish in 55.53, running with Lea was Club debutante Andrew Davies in his first ever race finishing in an excellent 55.59. Shaun (Roller) Louth content with 57.43, with Carolyn Crocker a year on from her first 10k race setting a new PB in 60.58. Pat Riches pleased with 61.11 with Rhiannon Clarricoates returning from a recent injury finishing in 61.47. A thrilled Juliet Steggar in her first ever race completed our team finishing in a creditable time of 66.55. Special mention to Julie Stapleton who not feeling 100% pulled up early on in the race.

5th October ~ Carsington Duathlon Carsington, Derbyshire. (Run/bike/run)

Organised by Punishing Events.

The organiser's name gives the clue to this event in the Derbyshire Dales and torrential rain only added to the effect. Alex and Mike left Sleaford at 0515 for the 8 am start with a slight detour to have a look at the most "interesting" descent of the bike course. It was 2k of steep, bumpy, twisty and soaking wet road with added doses of wet leaves, gravel and crushed conkers to increase the effect. Alex went strongly on the first run and the start of the bike only to puncture half way round and lose 9 minutes fitting a new tube with the help of two "white knights". Not a day to be standing around in race kit fixing your bike. We were both pleased to survive the horror descent and the whole event, which was a real challenge with the "punishing" hills on the bike especially in those conditions. Results 5k run/30k bike/5k run 171 finishers 119th Mike Folland 22:52/1:05:55/23:59 Total 1:52:46, 139th Alex Hetherington 21:19/1:12:17/23:44 Total 1:57:20.

5th Oct ~ Great Clarendon Way Marathon Salisbury, Wiltshire, Multi-Terrain.

Great Clarendon Way Marathon - Salisbury from Godolphin School to King's School in Winchester. Sunday morning was a good turn out with the Half marathon and Relays going on at the same time despite the heavy down pours (I mean really down pours) until 10.30am, then it stops and we start running with mud, dirty water, deepest mud, woods and fields. Its harder then we expected. but I did it. My time did not bother me at all because I am always keen to help the last runners if they need water or sweets to boost there energy up. That was my 9th Marathon, finishing in a new personal best time of 5.52.28.

Thanks to Stephen Brear for his Report.

5th Oct ~ The Great North Run Newcastle, Tyneside, Road.

Well whoever thought that getting up at 4.00am on a Sunday morning was a good idea need their head testing. Well anyway that was what we had to do to get up to Newcastle on time for my Big Day. So off we set my hubby Dean Kindly driving and my kids in the back who 10 minutes into the journey were soundly asleep in the back for the car. I could not believe how nervous I was. I had never done anything like this before race for life a couple of times, the Branston Dash and not forgetting the ill fated Grimsthorpe 10 km where i had a little accident. Anyway with no traffic at all we arrived in Newcastle and my family had dropped me off near the start. They were then going to South Shields to meet me at the finish. The weather was perfect beautiful sunshine if a tad on the cold side. Not a cloud in the sky. I made my way to meet my friend Lisa who was running with me and who I might add is going to join us as a new member of the Toonies having listened to me constantly say how great we all are. How could she resist. Everyone was so friendly as I was walking towards the start area to meet my friend I chatted to so many people everyone so excited to be there all running for different reasons. I was running for Cancer research today running in memory of my Dad who passed away 17 years ago from cancer, and Phillip my cousin who died last year from bowel an lung cancer. and to celebrate the life Deans Brother who had cancer of the bowel and liver in 2003 but still going strong at the moment and has been cancer free for 3 years. So the start was really emotional with the playing of Abide with me i stood there tears streaming down my face but just so happy to be there. So Lisa and I lined up at the start so nervous but so excited. As the start came it took us 29 minutes to get to the start and we were off. Tony Blair waving at us as we went past. So many people all running together. It was amazing. We started off nice and steady i really didn't want to go off too fast and then struggle. So we were at a nice even pace chatting away the first mile went so quick. With a quick squat behind a concrete pillar in the underpass of the road for a wee!!!!!! There was no way I was queuing at the portaloos and loosing precious minutes. The crowd were amazing so many cheers shouting out our names and words of encouragement as we both went past. Our names were on our vests along with the charities we were running for. Music playing at every corner. Fellow runners chatting away to us. It was great. Running over the Tyne Bridge was something else. And the Red Arrows fly past. SO we were well on our way the miles went by so quick and I felt great my ankle holding up no problem first 5 km went by and then it was up hill for the next 2.5 miles by this time it was getting quite warm and the Lucozade station was well received and much needed. Then a big sign saying now 3 miles down hill but it seemed a long while coming and but still I was going great. Loving every minute of it. 10 km came and went still I was going great then mile markers 7,8 and 9 with a much needed run through showers just past 8 miles. The hospitality of the crowd was immense cheers, sweets, ice poles, oranges,marshmallows, drinks. high 5's from all the kids. The fire brigade using their hose pipes to cool us down. So then I got to mile 10 her I started to wain 10 was the furthest I had ever run, so the next 3.1 miles was into new territory for me. And to top it all this was where the course takes a nasty slow arduous incline for what felt like forever. It was now that it became mind over matter, my legs started to ache for the first time, my ankle I had no problems with at all. I just felt tired and heavy. But I just dug deep and despite loosing my running partner who was pulling away as i slowed down. I just carried on going. Each step knowing was a step nearer to the end. I made the most of each water, shower and Lucozade station. It wasn't long before I made it to the steep incline and I could see the sea for the first time I knew it was only a mile or so to the end. The cooling sea breeze in my face the sight of the lovely coastline of South Shields in my view. Emotionally it was all too much I looked up to the sky and I couldn't believe I had actually nearly done it. Never in my life did I ever think I would achieve this but I was here and I was doing it. Tear streaming down my face. I knew I could do it as I got ever near to the finish I got faster from somewhere I found pace in my legs and then it was there the finish line. My hubby my daughter Jess and son Daniel cheering through the end of my Great Great North Run. 2 hours and 52 minutes it had taken me. Well I'm off back for more of the same next year bring it on. (Boy do I ache even my aches ache, but I've been on cloud nine ever since) Who's joining me next year please bring tissues. Just one last word so far I have raised £350.

Thanks to Clare Bergner for her Report.

11th Oct ~ Survival of the Fittest Nottingham, Multi-Terrain.

Be warned all club members, if Chris Smith has a very good idea for a slightly different race he would like you to enter with him 'BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID' 10km didn't sound too bad, even though painted across the finish line in big letters 12.5KM should have said something, along with the view of the first obstacle 4 metre high bales, and the last obstacle 3 metre high wall. The various obstacles between the first and last varied from ok. to 'I know I should not have entered'. Obstacle courses including scramble nets with hideously muddy stuff underneath, to a double soaking in the water sports centre at Holme Pierrepont. An urban jungle, scrambling through wrecked cars, over skate board ramps and trying to climb a ramp 3 meters high covered in margarine. This was certainly a survival of the fittest, we were in good company as in the first wave of 200 runners on the start line with Chris and me was Dean Macey our Olympic decathlete. I managed to finish in 1hr 15 mins about 2 minutes behind Chris, he only kept ahead because he knew that I may have other ideas of where to shoot that arrow on the archery section. The last obstacle the 3 meter high wall may as well have been a block of flats, I was struggling somewhat, but to my amazement I was suddenly on top of the wall, having been hurled up there by two huge guys dressed as nurses. It pays to have medical insurance.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his report and now for Chris Smith's take on it all.....

My 45th race of the year was a little different from all before it! I got a phone call from Alex of Goodness Shakes telling me I had won a place in their team! Great free racing! 4 days to train... What have I let myself in for? A little research on the website and I'm scared and very interested. Thanks again to Alex and my team mate Dave (180 Marathons) Raynes also has a place so Team "Sleaford Town Runners Extreme Adventure" is born! Yea Haaaa (yes we're a bunch of cowboys) I really should have told him about the race, so I let him in on the details on the drive to Nottingham to various groans. We sign in and get the Goodness Shakes T-Shirts on followed by the Before Pictures, very clean! It's at this point that we notice the Farmer Giles's Bale Wall, Final Wall and Archery, looks fine we think. After a pre race Goodness Shake an energetic warm up and we line up for the start. Dean Macey says a few words, hang on he's in our team – great news, I make a mental note to try and catch him. 3-2-1 and off we go! Mad rush for the bale wall and the crazy camera man on it followed by a long run out past Nottingham Forest to the PK Zone, very strange and not what road runners are used to but I was there early so no problems. The next zone is the Army Assault Course complete with scramble net, crawl nets and mud – all great fun and a real change. I leave the crawl nets muddy but with a great smile. Another blast down to the Postman's Walk, hard to explain but think cold water and lots of it, no way to walk on the wire it's just a question of fall in and get cold and wet. After this is the slide into the water and swim round an island all very cold and different. Next some cross country with nasty little ups and downs, that's more normal for us runners. Next up is the Road Works Slalom with interesting Spiders Web, Slalom and Maze, the Margarine Covered Ramp with climbing ropes looks easy, it's not at all! Four goes to get up that and make a mental note to do much more upper body work, where can I get kettle bells in the next 10mins? The Urban Action Zone was very strange, climbing through cars and running up and over skateboard ramps, great fun! a real first for me and very enjoyable. The "Stocking Fillers" were interesting little extras between the main obstacles. Converting a Rugby Try and scoring a Basket (Basketball) were quite skilful and I managed both first time! The water pipe through mucky pond water was not such fun and made the car stink all the way home. A cross country run down to Nottingham Forest Football Ground for the Goodness Shakes Stadium Challenge, up and down many small flights of steps, hard but not hard enough for us hill runners but many others were suffering by this stage. Next is 1k back to the start/finish area and the Under Armour Archery Challenge and again, (with Luck), I manage to hit the target first shot. A small run then it's the final killer wall! Ahhhhh after trying once to get over un-assisted we work as a team and I give a fellow competitor a leg up, when he is up there he grabs my arm and another gives me a leg up and I'm up there! Team work rules. After dragging up a competitor I jump down and run for the finish remembering to put my arms up and pose for the camera. My team mate Dave is just behind by about 2 minutes, I can't believe it! How did he do that? A real great race with a difference, it's ALL different and very special. We had such a great time we will be back next year! I have been looking for other adventure races already and will be at the HellRunner Up North, it will be good to catch up with the Goodness Shakes Team I just have to break the news to Dave that he is doing another crazy race! Oh hang on tomorrow's Half Marathon is really going to hurt as well.

11th Oct ~ Waltham Winder Waltham on the Wolds, Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

It was back to 2 years ago and the good, old Waltham Winder routes for this classic multi-terrain event with a good portion of hills. 5 Toonies started the 16 mile run with Mark Sands and Dave Tilley leading off the field. The joking before the start about going wrong soon came true as within 2 miles our 2 stars led the whole field astray! Dave Taylor, Alex Hetherington and Mike Folland knew the route and were the first to stay on track but were soon overhauled by the lead runners. In the end Mark had a great run to come 2nd in 2 hours 2 minutes with Dave Tilley 2 minutes back in 4th place. Alex, Dave Taylor and Mike stayed together till just before the end with Alex finishing in 2 hours 30 minutes in 21st place and 2nd lady. Dave and Mike were 23rd and 24th one minute down.

In the 10 mile event Mick Dakin came home in an excellent 8th place in an official time of 1 hour 59 minutes, which must be wrong.

Thanks to Mike Folland for his report.

12th Oct ~ The Great Eastern Run Peterborough, Road.

A final blast of summer with temperatures reaching the low twenties made for a warm day's racing for our Club members at Peterborough. This is an ever-growing Half Marathon, which though slightly congested for the first three miles, would open up as the field settled into their pace. Not the most scenic of races which is mainly run in and around the housing estates that surround

Peterborough. Great support though from the local residents more than made up for this and it was flat! Chris Smith led our members across the finish in a pacy 1.30.03, Paul Freemantle 1.39.08 pleased with his time, as was Fiona Robertson stepping up in race distance to compete in her first Half Marathon and breezing home in an impressive 1.40.05. Keith Boseley just adrift of Fiona setting a new PB of 1.40.28. Angie Harvey content with 1.41.55 as was Candy Louth 1.58.54. Aune Turkson-Jones satisfied with 2.00.32 though keen to improve, and reduce her Half Marathon time further. Catherine Simpson not enjoying the heat still posted a creditable time of 2.16.58. Pat Riches 2.19.22 crossed ahead of Shaun Louth who finished in 2.20.06. Alistair Whitaker completed our team who has struggled recently with injuries, and was therefore delighted to finish with no reaction to those injuries in 2.35.51.

19th Oct ~ Abingdon Marathon Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Road.

After a whole summer training for this event it was a relief that I was met with near perfect conditions for the Abingdon marathon on Sunday 19th October. Eleven years since my only other marathon run I set myself a target of no walking and a 4:15 to 4:30 target for the race. After starting towards the back and avoiding my tendency to go too quickly I soon settled into a conformable pace. The run takes place over a fairly flat 2 lap course with a slight variation for the first and last couple of miles, taking in various industrial estates and small villages around Abingdon. With 647 finishers it was a fairly relaxed and well organised race starting and finishing at a small athletics track. Despite struggling over the last couple of miles I was more than happy with my time of 4:07:16. I may even be back for another go next year! I would like to thank many Club members and especially Mike for their advice and support over my long summer training.

Thanks to Simon Lunn for his Report.

19th Oct ~ Leicester Half Marathon Leicester, Leicestershire. Road.

March 2007: after over 25 years of inactivity I take up running. March 2008: having completed the Bath half-marathon in 2.28.37 I vow, whilst sobbing into my husband's chest, that I will never ever ever run another half. I don't recall exactly when or how the Leicester City half marathon came into my consciousness - certainly I was familiar with the city having worked there previously for 4 years, and I suspect the word "flat" in the course description played its part. Anyhow, by June I had worked and reworked a training programme which would see me trading banter with spectators at mile 12, whilst picking off some of my slower competitors with a consoling word and a cheery wave as I eased towards the finish line. Don't get me wrong - I had no illusions about speed. But I did believe I could make the experience a comfortable - dare I say an enjoyable - one. A knee injury forced me into eight weeks of virtual inactivity and consideration of whether or not to compete at all. And then my "shall I or shan't I?" dilemma was resolved: at the West Pinchbeck 10k I came across the Sleaford Town Runners. Too shy to speak to anyone at the event, it took me a further week to pluck up the courage to contact Angie by e-mail. She encouraged me to go along the following Thursday and by the end of that evening, with the help of Carolyn Crocker, I had made my mind up. The race began on time at 9.20am and the weather was dry, cool and overcast, as approximately 2,000 competitors set off, most competing in the half marathon although a full marathon was taking place at the same time. From the start in Victoria Park we ran the first mile downhill (oh dear, this is going to end in tears) into the city centre then out of town over the Belgrave Flyover and along the "golden mile" of curry houses in Melton Road. At the six mile point we half marathoners took a left turn towards Wanlip and then into Watermead Country Park. The wind was in our faces now but the sun had come out and the trees looked spectacular in their autumn mantles. I even smiled when overtaken by a small child on a tricycle. I was still smiling, metaphorically speaking, after mile 8 and possibly mile 9 but as I reached the National Space Centre after 10 miles it was becoming Hard Work. On we wound through Abbey Park and back into the city where the route twisted round the new shopping centre then carried on through the heart of the city. The only thing worse than the effort of putting one foot in front of the other was the knowledge of what was to come - that final mile uphill. I had run the whole course and for the sake of my pride I didn't want to walk: no choice but to put my foot on the pedal knowing the tank was running on empty. And thus it transpired that that last painful, knee-pounding, grimace-inducing mile was my quickest. Then it was onto the flat for the last few hundred yards - the crowd cheering, my friends urging me on and my husband taking a photograph - of me smiling! - for a finish of 2.24.55. So thank you to the Sleaford Town Runners, of whom I am now a member, and from now on I'll stick to 10Ks. Probably.

Thanks to Mandy Connor for her Report.

19th Oct ~ Spires & Steeples Lincolnshire, Multi-Terrain.

Sunday 19th October was the date for the first running of the Spires and Steeples challenge, the full distance being from Lincoln to Sleaford using a waymarked footpath. The event started in the grounds of Lincoln castle and gave an excellent down hill start running down the cobbles of steep hill Lincoln. From there out in to the countryside to Washingborough, following the well written descriptive map, for those that were reading it the course was easy to follow. This was not the case for everyone though, as the 15 or so runners who were in front of me suddenly appeared behind me having taken a wrong turn in Washinborough and were now trying to make up lost ground. The course wound its way through many of our wonderful Lincolnshire villages towards the half way mark at Metheringham, where the shorter course finished, and after taking on refreshments the runners for the full marathon headed on towards Scopwick. The course was dry under foot and the weather was pleasant if a little breezy, after Scopwick we headed for Rowston, Digby, Dorrington and on to Ruskington. The final stage took us out across the busy A153 to pick up the river

bank and turn for the final push on to the finish at the Sleaford Leisure Centre, this was a tough section uneven under foot and head in to the now stiff breeze. It was good to be greeted at the finish after my 4hrs 15 minutes of running by fellow club members, some who had finished at the half way mark, some who had completed the full and some who hadn't run but made the effort to turn out and see us home, many thanks to them all for their support. Special thanks to Chris Smith who cycled the full course on Saturday to add a few indication arrows to make the course easier to read on the day. Sleaford town runners had a great turn out for the half and the full marathon 16 runners in all, and this would make a great event next year to get as many members as possible to have a go at this course, with the usual gathering and debrief in the Barge and Bottle after the race. Well done to the organisers of this new event, and I hope they manage to make this an annual event for the future.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his Report.

Chris Smith led home the 12 mile Club finishers in 1.30, Beth Wilmot and Mick Dakin crossed together in 1.41 with Danielle La Roche next to finish in 1.46. Catherine Simpson and Fiona Robertson finished in 2.12, Holly McDonnell running well until a muscle injury forced her slow, still finished with her Dad John in 2.17, Hollies Brother Matthew also running would finish some 10 minutes ahead, with Pat Riches completing our team finishing in 2.20. Mark Sands and Dave Tilley looked relaxed as they finished in 3.32, Alex Hetherington following up her first lady finish at the Seabank Marathon in the Summer again finished first lady home in 3.44. Dave Taylor produced a solid time of 3.58 accompanied for the second half of the race by Mike Folland. Dave Raynes 4.15 and Stephen Brear completing our full distance runners finishing in 5.55.

26th Oct ~ Fenland 10 Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Fenland Runners

Mark Sands and Mick Dakin opted for this 10 mile road race in Cambridgeshire instead of following Dave Tilley to Worksop. Starting from outside Marshland School the race passes through Walton Highway, Walpole Highway and Walpole St. Peter, returning to West Walton and finishing in the grounds of the adjacent Primary School. Apart from two flyovers crossing the A47 it is completely flat and fast times possible. Mark produced another fine performance finishing 6th out of 294 finishers in 58.46. Good to see Mick Dakin gradually returning to fitness in a quick time of 1.12.27.

26th Oct ~ Great South Run Portsmouth, Hampshire, Road.

My 6th Great South Run Southsea-Portsmouth. Its a new day, a new challenge and yes its the same old rainy cold morning first thing. At 10.25 the warm up starts bringing warmer weather. Thousands of runners more than last year, lots with funny costumes, including stars from TV who are real stars for supporting us and the charity runners going for gold. Competitors pass the lovely D-Day museum towards Gunwarf Keys around old Portsmouth and new including Eastney and finishing in style cracking up my run 1.21.46 in a new PB time, 2 minutes off my time for last year. Next year will be another 2 minutes who knows?

Thanks to Stephen Brear for his Report.

Meanwhile also lining up with thousands of runners alongside Paula Radcliffe, was our Club member Danielle La Roche having travelled to Portsmouth to compete in this race. The Bupa Great South Run is raced over a fast 10-mile course providing varied scenery coupled with stunning views and passing many outstanding historic landmarks. Danielle aiming for a target time of around eighty minutes finished in an excellent time of 1.22.47.

26th Oct ~ Worksop Half Marathon Worksop, Nottinghamshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Worksop Harriers AC.

The Worksop Half Marathon is arguably one the most scenic Half Marathons around. Starting and finishing in the centre of Worksop, this undulating course takes runners in and around Clumber park. The rain that most competitors woke to had cleared by the 10.30 start time leaving in its wake mild temperatures in gorgeous Autumn sunshine, that remained for the majority of the race. Dave "The Fox" Tilley after consecutive weeks of multi-terrain races returned to his usual self assured style on the road finishing 36th overall in 1.22.02. An under the weather Chris "Zohan" Smith refused a Sunday lay in Grrrrrrr! and finished in his usual competitive style in 1.32.10, Simon England lowered his personal best further in a pacey 1.33.13. Paul Freemantle ran a season's best time of 1.38.06, Mike Folland was more than satisfied with his 1.42.16. Angie Harvey running well before an enforced visit into the woods! finished in 1.43.30. Aune Turkson-Jones just missed out again on the two hour mark albeit on a more challenging course than Great Eastern, crossing in 2.00.42, Catherine Simpson running her third long distance race in consecutive weeks, stormed home in a new season's best time of 2.12.49. Friend of Town Runners James Chambers running on fitness alone with little distance in his legs ran a creditable 2.10.44.

2nd November ~ Derwentwater 10 Keswick, Cumbria, Road

Host Club ~ Keswick AC.

It's very hard to put into words how I feel about this race, so instead a list of everything that was great. The most beautiful day – bright sunshine, 8 degrees, no wind.

The most beautiful place in the whole world.

The chance to compete in a race that I watched as a child. My Dad and his friends ran every year in the 70's and 80's and I never, ever though I'd be able to run this far.

The very strong field – the 1st 26 men and 1st 2 ladies would come in under the hour (bear in mind the hilly course!) – some top quality athletes.

Running the first ¾ mile with the legendary Ron Hill.

The amazing Autumn colour running down into Borrowdale.

Having STR member of the month Clare running with me and her son and daughter cheering us on and holding our warm tops and car keys.

Meeting up with a lady I met whilst running in St. Andrews in the summer – she even remembered my name.

The bemused looks of shoppers in the centre of Keswick as we began to congregate for the start: “they must be some of them fell runners” I heard one man say.

The huge cheer and loads of clapping from everyone at the start – Keswick just stopped, all non-runners moved onto the pavement – there were no barriers, no police.

The support from all the other runners throughout the race, especially those who knew the route and were happy to give advice on where the steepest and longest inclines would be.

The fact that although I was running at a good pace, over inclines that I'm not used to, it didn't hurt one bit. I'm not saying I didn't work, but the only ache was in my cheeks from smiling so much.

The view from the Catbells side of the lake looking over towards Skiddaw.

The strong sense of being “at home”.

The low key, no fuss feeling that surrounds the whole event.

The £6 entry fee – this leaves you with some money to spend at Pete Bland's van – loads of really useful kit at very reasonable prices.

The facilities at Keswick School were excellent.

Managing a PB – 76.43 – you can't help but run this well, you don't actually run, you kind of get carried round by the beauty of the place – it's very dream like.

Thanks to Fiona Robertson for her Report.

2nd Nov ~Hell up North Delamere Forest Park, Cheshire, Multi-Terrain.

Let's start at the end... This Race Is BRILLIANT, the most interesting and challenging race I have ever done and that's from a history of over 400 races of all classes from ultra to international mountain race. Team “Toonie Express” – Chris Smith & Dave Raynes left Ancaster early for Cheshire and the Delamere Forest, this proved to be the perfect venue for a race called HellRunner. There was a busy little event village with the RAF Recruitment team, maybe they saw something in people who would do this race, as well as our old friends from Goodness Shakes and many others, it was nice to meet Alex the boss from Goodness Shakes who was also racing, although we didn't see her at the end! There were 1,900+ entered for the race but only 1,400+ finishers so either they didn't all turn up or didn't all finish, probably a bit of both! The start was evil with a twisty long uphill followed by a fast downhill but we did have fireworks! What ensued is hard to put into words but it's burnt into my mind. There was a first bog, I thought ahh that was the bog of doom (well they did fill it with horse poo), didn't look too bad! Wrong!! more bogs later ahh these must be the bogs, waist deep, muddy, stinky... Nope we get to half a mile from the finish so all nice and tired then meet the Bogs of Doom, hundreds of yards of real muddy stinky stagnant river waist high with bits of tree now that was hard. The Hills of Hell was not so much one bit of the 12 mile route but a concept that the planner kept at the front of his mind all the time, although there were some quite spectacular ups and downs. This was not your normal race very VERY far from it (see the pictures) this was the most fun you can have in mud, water and running shoes even if you do have to throw away your socks afterwards! Thanks to Dave for driving, I hope the car smells better now. I'll drive next year! Chris Smith 213rd 1:44:19 32nd in class Top 15%, Dave Raynes 380th 1:53:21 12th in class Top 30%, Not bad for a couple of old guys! 1,900+ entrants 1,446 finishers

Thanks to Chris for his Report.

2nd Nov ~ New York Marathon New York, USA, Road.

Dubai based members Anna and Nick Berrill took the long flight west to run the New York Marathon (allowing Granny and Auntie to fly out to Dubai from the UK as babysitters!). Despite cold, windy conditions and a long wait at the start Nick had a tremendous run, almost even paced, to finish in 2:52:13. Anna suffered from a bad stitch starting at 10 miles, slowed drastically and struggled even to finish eventually getting round in 3:27:46.

Thanks to Mike Folland for his Report.

2nd Nov ~ Stevenage Half Marathon Stevenage, Hertfordshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Fairlands Valley Spartans.

On Sunday morning after 12 hours plus of treacherous wind and rain and a few confirmation texts to each other early morning that yes we really DID want to go, we set off on the 95 mile voyage down the A1 to Stevenage. On arrival at the Ridlin Athletics Stadium we queued to pick up our timing chips and numbers, dropped off our kit bags and had a quick 400 metres warm up run around the track to pass the time as the start was delayed due to the high numbers of people queuing to pick up their numbers and chips at the registration desk. At 10:40 we lined up at the start with the other 800 runners. We stood behind the 2 hour finisher's marker, Shaun Roller Louth hoping for a time of 2:15 which would be a season's best and Danielle happy to just run around with Shaun today and treat this one as a training run. At 10:45 the gun went off and we departed the stadium and headed towards the Fairlands Valley Park which we entered at about 2 miles on what was to be our first lap. A few other sights we would run by included the Stevenage Borough FC football ground, the Millennium Woodland Area and the scenic lakes within the park. There was some light drizzle (the really fine stuff that soaks you through) at about 3.5 miles which was a welcome relief to the runners. At this point we were keeping an easy sub 10 min P/M pace. We wondered as Shaun started to slow down at 6 miles if we might be lapped by the race leaders as we saw them across the lake but a nifty diversion which extended the second lap meant our pride was left unscathed. The 2nd lap passed slower as Rollers legs began to tire but with some great support from Danielle, the Marshalls and the sporadic groups of spectators we ran on into the latter miles of the run. As we entered the stadium for our grand 400 metre sprint finish the sun came out and we got a shout from the man on the tany for the two Sleaford Town Runners entering the stadium. Wahoo!! We felt obliged to wave to the adoring crowds as we effortlessly circled the track and crossed the finish line in a satisfactory time of 2 hours 13 mins and 06 seconds. A seasons best for Roller and an enjoyable easy training run for Danielle. Overall a friendly well organised and well marshalled half with an excellent goody bag containing T-shirt, medal, water, banana and some other snacks. This run is suitable for all abilities and we really enjoyed ourselves and would recommend it to you all. Don't be put off by the drive!

Thanks to Danielle La Roche & Shaun Louth (La Rock 'n' Roller) for their Report.

9th Nov ~ The Poppy Run 5 Mile Boston, Lincolnshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Boston & District AC.

A windy start to the day greeted our members that made the short journey to Boston for this 5 mile race in aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy appeal. Flat and fast if not running into a head wind with bags of PB potential. Mark Sands continues in his rich vein of form finishing 3rd overall and 1st in his age category crossing the line in 27.15. Also running well was Simon England finishing in a pacy 32.37, with Caz Flannigan 37.00 and picking up a trophy for finishing 2nd in her age category. As would Aune Turkson-Jones 3rd in her age category in 41.25. Not to be outshone Pat Riches collected 3rd in her age category crossing with Paul Pocklington (good to see back racing) in 49.13.

15th Nov ~ Seagrave Challenge Seagrave, Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

This year the challenge had an added surprise for the 488 runners and walkers at the village hall start, just before the start bell, rung by the yeoman, the organiser coolly announced due to a problem with a right of way they have added an extra mile to the course which will make the race 16.8 miles. Not usually a problem on a cross country course, until you add in to the equation of much more mud and extremely slippery conditions compared with previous years. The course is through beautiful countryside, including private estates and parklands but due to the conditions, runners spent most of the time looking at the ground trying to make sure they were not going to finish in a heap in the mud. The Toonies had a good turn out for this race with Dave Tilley and Mark Sands leading the way as usual and finishing in the same time of 2hrs 3mins in 7th and 8th place respectively. Chris Smith was next in in 50th place in a time of 2hr 20mins, feeling exhausted after his son Matthew had given Chris the slip and made his Dad chase him all the way back to Seagrave with Chris 2 minutes adrift with Matthew in 44th place in a fantastic time of 2hrs 18 mins. Next of the Toonies was Dave Taylor running well to finish in 64th place in 2hrs 28mins two minutes ahead of Alex Hetherington 2hrs 30mins and 68th place. Bringing up the rear for the Toonies having passed each other several times during the race was Dave Raynes 2hrs 33mins and Mike Folland 2hrs 39mins in 82nd and 95th places, still very pleased with the times considering the wet conditions and the ques at some of the styles.

Thanks to Dave Raynes for his Report.

16th Nov ~ St. Neots Half Marathon St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Riverside Runners St. Neots.

This was the seventh running of this superb half marathon, voted ninth best race in the UK by readers of Runners World magazine in 2007. With such billing it was no surprise that this race reached its pre-race entry limit months before the 10 o'clock start time on Sunday 16th November. Starting and finishing in Eynesbury, Cambridgeshire under grey skies with fine drizzle throughout. Slightly undulating in places but mainly flat with a scenic course in and around Eynesbury. The Fox Dave Tilley fresh from his efforts the day before racing the Seagrave Challenge, produced another fine race finishing in 1.21.50. Simon England fast approaching a sub 1.30 time, inched closer finishing with a new personal best time of 1.31.05. A rough looking Chris Smith also at Seagrave the day before, still produced a steely run in 1.32.08. Keith Boseley with bags of energy and running to spare crossed effortlessly in 1.38.08, Paul Freemantle was to be satisfied with 1.38.36 as was Angie Harvey 1.42.10. Danielle La Roche chasing a new PB threw every effort (literally!) into a sprint finish and was rewarded with her first sub 1.50 time in doing so a new PB of

1.49.36. Stephen Brear 1.50.11 also produced a pacy finish and was delighted with his time. Shaun Roller Louth with Fiona Robertson for company was pushed on to surpass his pre race target time of 2.10 with a season's best 2.01.10, Fiona crossing in 2.01.16. A fit again Alistair Whitaker pushed on after a cautious start and finished at a canter in 2.11.31, also pleased with their times was Catherine Simpson 2.15.22 and completing our Club members to finish was Pat Riches finishing comfortably in 2.17.09. This race certainly lived up to its ninth best UK race tag, watch out for entries opening for 2009!

23rd Nov ~ Clowne Half Marathon Clowne, Derbyshire, Road

Host Club ~ Clowne Road Runners Club.

Chris Smith made the lone journey representing our Club to Derbyshire for the Clowne Half Marathon. Chris competing with a few injury niggles would still finish in a respectable time of 1.38.02.

23rd Nov ~Farmyard Frolics Spinney Campus, Brooksby College, Leicestershire, Multi-Terrain.

Lea Addelee travelled to Leicestershire for this 10 kilometre cross country run. This is the first year that the Meningitis Trust has organised Farmyard Frolics; however this highly successful event has been run for over 20 years raising thousands of pounds for charity. Held at Spinney Campus, Brooksby College in Leicestershire, this unusual 10k is competed over farm tracks, grass and woodland. Various challenges along the way include a "paddle" in the Rearsby brook, a straw bale tower, cross-country horse jumps, tractor tyre pile and the famous "muckheap". Lea completed the course in 1.20.

23rd Nov ~ The Hereward Relay Peterborough, Multi-Terrain

Host Club ~ March AC.

Peterborough to Ely 37.6 miles in 4 stages, 121 teams finished.

This year we had 2¾ STR teams as Dave Tilley's Lost Soles also have Mick and Mark in the club now, joined by friend of the club and body repairer Jonathan Hobbs. The event is developing its own STR ritual. Leave Sleaford at first light 7 am and arrive at our preferred parking spot in Peterborough at 8 am to make straight for McDonalds for toilets and coffee. Then Stage 1 runners get warmed up for the 9 am mass start : that was Fiona and Andrew for the A and B teams with Mick for The Lost Soles. It was damp, cool and breezy at this point and we began to think the promised snow was not coming – some hope! As the runners made their way to Whittlesey, it was back to the cars to get Stage 2 runners in place and warmed up in time for their take over. This was when the weather started going nasty with cold driving rain steadily turning to sleet and snow freezing one side of their faces. Fiona came in placed 41st just before Mick to give Team A a short lived lead from the Lost Soles before Mark stormed past Dave Taylor, with Alex chasing after him on their private head to head. See the pictures of Andrew and Fiona finishing just 15 minutes apart for the change in snow cover. If Stage 2 to March was an ordeal for runners, the drive was a greater nightmare on snowy, ungritted fenland roads with rivers and dykes alongside the whole time – and never a guard rail in sight – I've not been so worried since I stopped canoeing and I was the driver - my poor passengers! Mark brought The Lost Soles up to 12th place with further great runs from Dave Taylor and Alex, who won their duel by just 15 seconds and also gained 29 places for Team B. Stage 3 to Welney had the runners really sliding everywhere on the snow covered road sections. Jonathan brought The Lost Soles up to 9th and Angie and Auna had good legs to finish with their teams in 60th and 97th positions. The 4th and final Stage to Ely Football Club saw Dave Tilley picking up another place for the Lost Soles to be a fantastic 8th overall. As last year Paul had a really strong run, picking up 19 places for the B team to come 78th in 5:29:15. Mike was pleased to start with a 22 minute cushion from Paul and held position to bring the A team home 60th in 5:12:19 – just in the top half. By this time the snow had long stopped, the wind dropped and the sun was out! The team captains were running Stage 4 - I wonder why? For more info see the attached stats, Paul and Angie's photos giving a great flavour of the day and last year's account for more about the event itself.

Who's coming next year?

Times ~ Lost Soles, STR A Team & STR B Team.

Stage 1	Mick Dakin 47:14 44th , Fiona Robertson 46:45 41st & Andrew Davies 1:01:25 115th .
Stage 2	Mark Sands 1:15:13 9th , Dave Taylor 1:31:21 67th & Alex Hetherington 1:31:06 65th .
Stage 3	Jonathan Hobbs 1:09:22 6th , Angie Harvey 1:31:12 79th & Aune Turkson-Jones 1:38:49 97th .
Stage 4	Dave Tilley 1:02:45 4th , Mike Folland 1:23:01 74th & Paul Freemantle 1:17:55 55th .

Team totals: 4:14:34 **8th**, 5:12:19 **60th** & 5:29:15 **78th**.

Thanks to Mike Folland for his report and stats.

30th Nov ~ Norwich Half Marathon Norwich, Norfolk, Road.

Club members Holly McDonnell and Dad John McDonnell travelled to Norwich to take part in their maiden Half Marathons The twenty-fourth City of Norwich Half Marathon is a fast rural 2-lap course starting at the Norfolk Showground. Holly had a fantastic

run dipping under two hours which is a great achievement for a first Half Marathon, crossing the line in 1.59.15. John would also produce a creditable time in his first Half finishing in 2.11.47.

7th December ~ The Grim Challenge Aldershot, Hampshire, Multi-Terrian.

Shaun denied it, as did Birthday boy Lea; the Fox was under suspicion however Catherine took the blame! Whoever was to blame for whooping up members to enter the Grim (oddly Zohan wasn't responsible) the alarm would still go off at 4.45am ready to head south for this 8 mile off road jolly? Clearing the car windows of ice on a very cold Sunday morning in preparation for the 3 hour trip to Aldershot, Hampshire was to certainly challenge one's enthusiasm! None-the-less eleven (Grrrrrrrrrr) Club members Dave Tilley, Mark Sands, Mick Dakin, Chris Smith, Catherine Simpson, Lea Addlesee, Andy Davies, Shaun Louth, Angie Harvey, Paul Freemantle and Danielle La Roche set off in four cars and with them Danielle's Australian boyfriend Luke Halvey making up the dirty dozen and talked into running this event by Danielle on his first race in England (May I suggest Luke, back in Oz Danielle swims with Great White Sharks in return!) Strangely on the journey south the temperature dropped as the Sun came up, joy! We arrived as did 2000 other hardy runners with a nice white blanket of frost covering the ground, at least the sun was out, 20 degrees I think not! Called the Grim the land is used to test Army vehicles, so expect it to be interesting was the advice! The course was described by the event organisers in their pre-race information sheet as follow. "You will reach a long hill shortly after the start before descending again eventually reaching a water filled ravine. You will run on over puddle-strewn paths before having to crawl under camouflage netting. You'll eventually reach some man-made mounds before arriving at and running through some rather large puddles. Expect to get very wet! You'll run on to the fast vehicle driving circuit where it is rocky underfoot. This brings you to some more large areas of water and the finish area". There you have it sounds straight forward, hmmm you didn't mention guys the 4x4 having to drive the course that morning to break the ice, the puddles in places were ponds and the mud was thicker than X Factor's finalist Eoghan Quigg's barnet! At the start we were briefed not to run at pace through the, ahem puddles, with advice on keeping to the sides as deep in the middle... yeah ok wotever! Dave & Mark had a twinkle of excitement in their eyes, Toonie Chief Chris was like a coiled spring, and the rest waited for the gun to go off with a mixture of joviality and trepidation! Off we went cameras in hand and plenty of grrrrrrrrrr! Within a mile after negotiating several ankle deep puddles runners started to head through the puddles with more confidence, Andy the Fish and I went for it straight down the middle 'wahay' look everyone its easy, whoops, slip, splash full frontal!! (Then flashback and Star Wars 1977! "Feel the force Luke" said Obi-Wan Kenobi and "don't run at pace through the puddles" I heard errr someone say 15 minutes earlier!) Thankfully as I fell ungracefully into the water, the Fish managed to avoid me and kept his balance, and there set the tone for the rest of the race. Danielle and Shaun tried to out do each other with the most grrrrrr poses throughout the race, Angie and Catherine 'Kitkat' tried to stay on their feet and keep clean, Mick who couldn't swim, kept me running to help dry my clothes! Lea and Andy indulged in the mud, Luke looked as most Australians do, chilled and relaxed and no doubt thinking of Bondi beach and cans of Fosters! Meanwhile Mark, the Fox and Chris serenely went about the day as if just another race! The final water feature made sure everyone finished nice and wet! Times were unimportant however for the record, Mark cantered round in 56.59, as did Dave 57.14, and Chris 1.05.14... Mick & Paul 1.23.43, Danielle, Luke, Catherine, Angie, Lea and Shaun all crossed in and around 1.39.31 with Andy making a huge splash.... literally at the finish 1.46. By the time we hit the pub back in Sleaford for much needed re-hydration courtesy of Dr's Guinness and Carlsberg our feet had almost thawed and talk was of 2009..... Bring it on grrrrrrrrrrrrrr!!!

7th Dec ~ Nene Valley 10 Mile Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Nene Valley Harriers.

A very cold and icy morning met the 4 Sleaford Town Runners who ventured the short distance to Bretton for a flat 10 mile race. The course is a 2 lap course with the 2nd lap taking a slightly different route with a mixture of paths through housing estates, road, park and even an off road section. A reasonable field of runners of just under 300 runners set off at 10:30am, very cautiously with the icy conditions. First Toonie home, smashing his predicted time was Greg Southern, with a time of 1:07:13. Aune Turkson-Jones was brilliantly paced by "professional" pacemaker Fiona Robertson, both finishing with 1:26:06 and Alistair Whitaker was delighted with a new PB by over 3 minutes and a sub 90 minutes time of 1:29:39. Thank you to friend of Sleaford Town Runners, James Chambers, for general support, photographs and conversation about Full English Breakfasts. Post race cup of tea and double chocolate chip muffins in the local Sainsbury afterwards turned the race into a more traditional club coffee and cake run!! Well Done to Nene Valley Harriers for a friendly and well marshalled race under difficult conditions.

Thanks to Alistair Whitaker for his Report.

14th Dec ~ Bedford Half Marathon Wootton, Bedfordshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Bedford Harriers AC.

Another Sunday morning drive down the A1 to the village of Wootton just outside of Bedford was the location for the four club members tempted by a last blast around a half marathon course this year. The skies were grey and the temperature was 1-2 degrees with a fine mist hovering in the air but no wind, the conditions were perfect. The course is 1 lap through some of the villages to the south west of Bedford. There are a few inclines in this run but don't be put off by them as from mile 9 onwards it's all down hill. 2000 runners were there for the 10am start which went off without a hitch. The first Toonie home was Simon Lunn who hoping for sub a sub 1:50 was very happy with 1:48:33. Next to finish was Aune Turkson-Jones who wanted to finish the year by running a half marathon in under 2 hours for the first time. Aune was therefore extremely pleased with her time of 1:55:00 which was also a

seasons best. Not too far back and next to roll over the finish line was Shaun 'Roller' Louth, aiming and succeeding in completing the run in under 2 hours with a time of 1:58:37 and yet again another seasons best. A very content Pat Riches crossed the finish after a strong run in 2:21:05 pleased with her efforts and happy with her last half of the year. Yet again thanks goes to friend of Sleaford Town Runners James Chambers for great support at various points throughout the race and taking the photos before and during the run. Thanks to Bedford harriers for a well organised and well marshalled race.

Thanks to Shaun Louth for his Report.

14th Dec ~ Santa Claus Run Lincoln, Road.

On the tiles at 11.30am a brisk morning though no snow from the night before. We aren't amused then. But luckily we had sun and a little cold snap on outside with this prolific 3rd Annual Lincoln Santa Fun Run a 3 km from the Castle through the Arch behind the Cathedral and on to Union Road then 1 more lap to go. Loads of Santa's coming through the castle without any snow about? 1 minute 55 seconds better than last year's time. Thank you to the Lincoln Rotary Club.

Thanks to Stephen Brear for his Report.

20th Dec ~Leeds Hyde Park 5k Time Trial Leeds, Yorkshire, Multi-Terrain.

Parkrun organise a series of free, friendly 5km weekly runs in several parks around the country including Leeds Hyde Park. An early start from Sleaford at 6.20am and after a slight delay due to getting lost in Leeds City Centre, they had changed the one way system since I worked there, I finally got to Leeds Hyde Park on what turned out to be an unseasonably mild day. The course took you diagonally across the park then 2.5 laps around the perimeter of the undulating park including a small but well muddy downward slope and the last 20 metres also off road. I lined up with a total of 56 runners, a smaller field than normal as it was the weekend before Xmas, and after a small delay we were off. My first ever 5km race and probably set off too fast with the garmin telling me a 4:47 for the first km and did not like the muddy slope, but was pleased to finish in 37th place in a time of 26:16.

Thanks to Alistair Whitaker for his Report.

21st Dec ~ Lincoln & District Runners XC South Common, Lincoln, Multi-Terrain.

Host Club ~ Lincoln & District Runners.

28th Dec ~ Millennium Runs On 10k Caythorpe, Nottinghamshire, Road.

Host Club ~ Southwell Running Club

One of the final races of the year saw a good turnout of our Club members who travelled to Caythorpe in Nottinghamshire. Near perfect conditions for this fast and flat 10k which made for a perfect way to end the year. A competitive race saw plenty of local Clubs field runners with over 600 runners starting the race. An out and back race along the River Trent, with milder weather than had been in recent days made for a great race. Mark Sands capped a fine year of racing with a new Seasons Best time of 33.30 20th overall. Dave 'The Fox' Tilley produced another strong run in 36.17, with Greg Southern ending the year with a new Personal Best of 39.37. Simon England 40.40 was pleased with his time as was Chris Smith 41.33. Paul Freemantle 43.21, was followed in by Sue Evans in a quick 44.14 and Simon Lunn 45.53. Angie Harvey was content with 46.47 soon to be followed across the line by an under the weather Aune Turkson-Jones 54.19, accompanied by James Chambers 54.20. A happy Catherine Simpson crossed in 58.40, with another fine run by Mandy Conner 60.01, Pat Riches 61.31 and Carolyn Crocker 62.22 completing our Team members across the line.

31st Dec ~ Ely New Years Eve 10k Ely, Cambridgeshire. Road.

Host Club ~ Ely Runners

Mike was suffering from Hereward Relay withdrawal symptoms so entered this race based on the village of Little Downham just outside Ely and in the middle of Stage 4 of the relay, which was his leg for the last 2 years. So Jan was persuaded that she wanted to see Ely Cathedral decorated for Christmas. At least the fog stayed away and there was no frost on the roads. After Speedwork the evening before, which at -3.8°C was interval training in a freezer, this was merely a race in the fridge as the temperature just struggled over freezing. Mike is wrapped up well in his smart brand new Club jacket ready for an extensive warm-up. 46 minutes and 56 seconds later coming 201st out of 516 and 2nd MV 65.

Thanks to Mike Folland for his Report.