

# THE FINISH LINE



Bourton Roadrunners

## Team Bourton rounds off the season in style

Stroud half  
Eynsham 10k  
Xmas party  
Junior reports

**BOURTON ROADRUNNERS** will be well represented at the GlosAAA Awards Presentation evening at the Gloucester Civic Suite on Friday 10 January.

Picking up first place awards will be Claire Harrison, (LV35), Shona Crombie-Hicks (Ladies Open), Steph Holton (LV45), Ali Lane (LV55), Mike Smith (MV40), Ewen Smith (MV45) and Dennis Walmsley (MV50).

Second place awards will go to Shona Crombie-Hicks (LV40), Susan Hunt (LV45), Lynn Hudson (LV55), Liz Hulcup (LV60), Mike Smith (Men Open) and John Gibson (MV55).

Receiving third-place awards will be Darren Long (MV40), Brian Hulcup (MV60) and Norm Lane (MV65).

Bourton Roadrunners will also be awarded with the Ladies Open, Ladies Vets and Mens Vets team awards.

A little after the event, news also came in that Bourton Roadrunners won the **Cheltenham Half-Marathon Running Club Challenge**. The team award recognises the efforts of Mike Smith, Dennis Walmsley and Catherine Wheeler on the day.

### Bourton 6 from 10 2014

Blackminster half – Sunday 9 March

Gloucester 20 – Sunday 16 March

Fairford 10k – early June

Bourton 1 mile – July

Westonbirt 10k – mid June

Cleeve Cuckoo – midweek in early June

Hooky 6 – mid August

Cirencester 10k - September

Stroud half – October

Tewkesbury 5 mile – early November

Reserves: Highworth 5 and Eynsham 10k

### GlosAAA road race series

The first three events for the 2014 road race series are Linda Franks 5 on Jan 26, Glos AC 20 mile on March 16 and Angels 10K on 27 April. The remainder of the series events will be announced in January 2014 and published on the GlosAAA website.

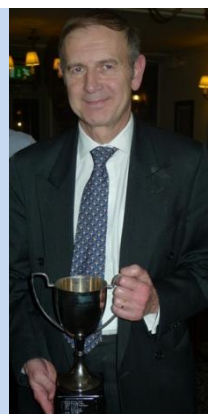


### What's Dennis looking so pleased about?

It's said that Dennis travelled further than Mike Smith's trip to run Romania to hunt down the time needed to win this year's age-related trophy. Dennis tells the story in Coaching Corner on page 9.

Meanwhile, John Gibson is this year's recipient of the Steve Humphries Trophy for outstanding service to the Club both as treasurer and on the committee.

A round-up of this year's club awards complete with embarrassing photographs is on pages 5 and 6.



**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER KATE KRZYWIEC**

## Chairman's Message

I have just looked at the Eynsham results and there were some good performances and an excellent turnout of Club members. It is nice to see so many trying for final points in the Club competitions.

As some of you will know I am not even walking at present having had an operation on my Achilles tendon earlier this month. At the time of writing the stitches are out and I have a few more weeks in a cast which should be removed just before Christmas to be replaced by a boot for at least four weeks then it will be a case of building the leg muscles back before I can resume a normal life. It will be well into 2014 before I am able to try running. Walking cycling swimming and skiing will all be possible before running.

As a result of my operation I shall not be coming to the Christmas Dinner this year and plan to present the Chairman's Cup on a Club night early in the New Year. My apologies to the winner who I shall announce when I make the presentation until then everyone can speculate!

I wish you every good wish for the festive season and happy injury free and successful running in 2014.

*Robin Macdonald*

November 2013

## Message from Jo Lewis

I was very touched to receive a beautiful bunch of flowers from you all as thanks for my stint as Newsletter Editor. To be honest I never expected to do it for so long or to churn out quite so many issues, but it was made easier and more satisfying by the people who took the time to e-mail and say thanks for each issue.

I'd like to thank very much regular contributors including Dennis for Coaching Corner, Tim Heming for letting me use many of his professional articles, Susan for her entertaining press reports and Ranonymous Runner, who has been quiet lately, but wouldn't it be nice if he/she might consider a comeback?

I wish you all good speed and stamina and rest assured that if your new Editor is happy to send me future issues I'll be keeping an eye on you. I wait expectantly for Ewen to crack that elusive sub 3-hour marathon and I'll watch out for Steve reaching the 700 mark, and 800, and on and on...

Chris I should probably have warned you about Susan's Super-injunction on any photos that make her look over 30 and that by tradition every issue must contain two different spellings of Kiey Thomas/Kiey Tomas/Kiey-Thomas or at least one Mutsaar with too many a's.

In any case it appears Gill has plans to keep me involved in the Half Marathon so no doubt I'll see many of you out there, about to tackle that lovely Barrington Hill. I don't envy you that one.

Take care all and thank you again.

*Jo Lewis*

## Editor's message

Looking back over past issues of **The Finish Line** (as I have to get a feel for things), it's astonishing that a small club like ours has (a) such a rich seam of talented athletes and (b) such a high-quality and creative newsletter through which to tell their stories.

Writing this at 1am on Christmas Eve, I now know that it not only takes a great deal of time but also no small amount of editorial and design skill. The fact that I have that I have neither of these will become evident as you go through the remaining pages. I only hope that, after the pain of doing the initial set-up, it will get easier to produce and the quality will improve!

Thanks Jo for setting such a high standard and producing such a fantastic newsletter. I will see you see at the start of the Hilly Half if they will let me run again.

Speaking of running (now there's a thing), I enjoyed my last race at Eynsham. The time wasn't as good as last year, but my usual mid-race wobble was short-lived and when I faded at the end it was nothing more than being short of a bit of fitness that I like to think I have got back already.

But my calves and lower back were stiff the next day and didn't loosen up until I was ready for the short run on Tuesday evening.

And the following weekend, when I started out on my long run (currently 12 miles), I felt immediately stiff and tense and realised that I was running with my shoulders hunched and it was actually starting to hurt.

I dropped my arms, tried to relax and remembered the advice that Dennis had given some time ago when he suggested that I imagine that I am holding a crisp in the fingers of each hand and this would help me to relax. When I started to do this, I thought of chunky Kettle Chips rather than Walkers as relaxing has never been my strong point. Now I try to imagine those crumbly Skips that melt in the mouth and break easily in the hand. Hopefully, I will get back into this habit and become a more relaxed runner.

Happy holidays one and all and don't eat too many crisps!

*Chris Dry*



## Press Reports by Susan Hunt

### OCTOBER 26th 2013

Conditions at the **32nd Stroud Half Marathon** were windy though mercifully dry for Bourton Roadrunners looking for PBs and county road race series points. The competition was tough as the field of 1,300 runners included a group of elite athletes from outside the county.

Mike Smith continued an excellent season with 3rd MV45 in 1:16:41. Next was Darren Long (1:23:39) and Rob French (1:23:52). Shona Crombie-Hicks was the 1st female county athlete to finish, as 5th Lady and 2nd FV40 with 1:24:11. Ewen Smith finished in 1:26:27, followed by Ian Shoemark in a superb PB of 1:27:20.

Claire Harrison was the 2nd Bourton lady home in 1:36:44. Next came Rob Humphris (1:42:26), Stephen Holton (1:44:24), Graham Lane (1:47:39), Brian Hulcup (1:48:48), David Pyne (1:50:02), Liz Hulcup (1:52:14) and Julia Morris (1:54:02). Shirley Creed managed a strong finish (1:57:23), just ahead of Emma Pinkham (1:57:28). Gill Carrick overcame recent niggles to finish in 1:57:54, with Lynn Hudson 2:03:40. The 2nd Ladies' team prize was awarded to Shona, Claire and Steph – a great achievement for the club, given the calibre of the field.

Meanwhile, the 10 mile **Great South Run** took place in equally breezy Portsmouth. Ed Rozier finished in 1:28:59 and Alan Gibson ran well to finish his first 10 miler just ahead of his dad, John (1:42:02 and 1:42:03 respectively).

Conditions were no kinder in the Welsh mountains (not surprisingly) where Susan Hunt was battered by gale force winds and whipped by stinging rain at the mountainous **Snowdonia Marathon**. She was relieved to finish with race number and hat still intact in 4 hours and 33 minutes.

### November 3rd 2013

19 Bourton Roadrunners lined up for the start of the **Guy Fawkes 5** mile race at Tewkesbury. Conditions were kinder for the 350 participants than they have been in previous years: it was windy but not raining for a change.

This was the final race in the county road race series and the penultimate race in the club 6 from 10 competition. Some runners could relax in the knowledge that they had already secured their county and/or club titles (or that they had no hope of winning anything) whereas others were still on a mission to win points for prizes.

Mike Smith and Dennis Walmsley battled it out at the front of the race. Mike's tactic - sheltering behind Dennis, before surging ahead at the finish - paid off, as he streaked to an 8 second victory. Mike was 9th overall and 1st MV45 (28:10) and Dennis 10th and 1st MV50 (28:18). Darren Long is never far behind the leaders and was 18th (30:12).

Shona Crombie-Hicks was the clear winner in the ladies' race, with 30:41 and ever-improving Steph Lane was 3rd Lady with 32:25. John Gibson has had a cracking

season (no-one can believe that he is 60) and finished in 34:35. Likewise Ali Lane had another outstanding run with 35:35.

Claire Harrison won the LV35 prize (36:16) with Brian Hulcup breathing down her neck (36:18). Steph Holton ran an excellent 36:42 and Mick Hunt, who only returned to running last month, so was happy to complete his 1st solo race in 18 years in 37:35. Liz Hulcup stormed to LV60 victory in 37:51.

Susan Hunt's legs hadn't quite forgiven her for the Snowdonia Marathon the previous weekend but carried her to a 38:50 finish. Consistent David Pyne ran 39:59 on the back of a cross country race at Pittville Park the previous day. He was followed by Gill Carrick (40:38), Shirley Creed (41:10) and Lynn Hudson (43:17).

Sadly, Ewen Smith pulled up at 3 miles with a hamstring injury. Hopefully he will recover quickly ready for next season.

### November 16th 2013

Four Bourton Roadrunners took part in the **Raceways Autumn Shakespeare** event at Long Marston Airfield. This bi-annual event gives the opportunity to race either 5k, 10k or a half-marathon, with all runners starting together and running laps of the disused airfield. It's not pretty; but it is flat.

The race is run in a relatively small space (hence lots of switch-backs), making it almost possible to see all the runners at once. This is a great advantage for supporters, who can continue to monitor the progress of their loved ones without leaving the queue for bacon rolls. The numerous hair-pin bends give runners plenty of opportunity to wave to their club mates but make it virtually impossible to sneak up on an opponent.

Dennis Walmsley chose to test his legs over the 5k, and finished 2nd in 17:05. Mick Hunt was keeping his wife company for the first part of her half-marathon, completing 5K in 23:21.

In the half-marathon, Andrew Evans dipped under his target 1:44 with 1:43:51 and Susan Hunt finished with a PB of 1:44:02.

The **Maylarch Eynsham 10k** is the final race in Bourton Roadrunners' "6 from 10" club competition. It also provides a final opportunity for the club's runners to move up the age-related competition rankings and, being a flat 2 lap course, has the potential to provide personal best times. The race attracts an extremely competitive field, since it is a Oxfordshire County Championships and Grand Prix event. Mike Smith was first home for Bourton (35:41), followed by Ian Shoemark (39:05) and Lucy Walmsley (39:23). Ewen Smith was testing out his hamstring injury, and having discovered that all was well, hooked up with Andy Peaston and paced him to his first sub-40 minute finish (39:40 and 39:48 respectively). Steph Lane finished in 40:12 and Niamh Shoemark realised her PB dream of a sub-42 minute 10k, with a chip time of 41:49:9. John Gibson ran 44:12 and Ali Lane was 1st FV55 with 44:43. Next was Brian Hulcup (45:50), Liz Hulcup (46:43) and Chris Dry (46:45). David Hanson

managed to stay ahead of Susan Hunt, with both recording chip times of 46:41. Catherine Wheeler's 47:05 was an excellent result for her first 10k race, followed in by David Pyne (48:57), Graham Lane (49:45), David Turnbull (50:01), Shirley Creed (51:28), Lynn Hudson (54:00) and Gary Holton 1:00:01.

## Steve Edward's update

**OCTOBER 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> 2013**

The **Enigma 3 Lakes Challenge** basically involves running three marathons in three consecutive days around three different lakes in Milton Keynes. The first marathon was at Willen Lake where Steve was pleased to finish the 7-lap course in a time of 3:11:53 although he did wonder whether this was a little quick for the 1st day, time would tell!

Going into day two at Furzton Lake, Steve really thought he'd be about 5-10min slower bearing in mind his finish time the day before and the fact that this course was 17 laps around a smaller lake! However after a steady start, he picked up in the 2nd half of the race to finish in a time of 3:12:35. The last time he ran back to back sub 3:15s was in 2011, however the big question now was whether he could repeat the performance again for a triple sub 3:15!

Day three was at Caldecotte Lake, a course Steve knows very well and feeling pretty tired he started the 7.5 lap race even steadier than the day before. By halfway, although he'd picked up a little he knew it was touch and go as to whether another sub 3:15 was going to be possible. But throwing caution to the wind he was determined to maintain the required pace for as long as he could and even put in little bursts of speed to give him some time in the bank. This plan could have easily backfired but on this occasion it worked a treat as Steve finished in a time of 3:12:53.

All three of Steve's finish times were within one minute of each other and his total cumulative time of 9hrs 37min 21sec equates to 7min 20sec pace for each one of the 78.6 miles, good enough to secure him 2nd place overall in the event. Commenting afterwards Steve said: "As always, my wife Teresa does a fantastic job in supporting me throughout these events, especially with making sure that I get my drinks at the right time. Regarding the performance, I'm absolutely thrilled and to be honest amazed as not since 1992 have I ran a triple sub 3:15 on consecutive days and as I approach my 51st Birthday, I really thought those days were over when I could do that. It just goes to show what can be achieved."

**November 17<sup>th</sup> 2013**

Steve took on the **Path 'n' Downs Marathon** in Maidstone. Despite several tough climbs in the first half, he was thrilled to run 3:06:54 after going through halfway in 1:36. Not only did he get 1st V50 and come 7th overall but, after checking his records, was very pleased to discover that it was his 100th marathon under 3hrs 8mins.

**November 30th and December 1st**

The **Saxon Shore Double Marathon** was a new event for Steve and what better way to celebrate his 51st birthday than by running back-to-back marathons! The course involves four out and back loops along the coast line from North Deal. Although fairly flat, nearly half the route is run on shingle making it quite challenging in parts.

Day one proved to be even more challenging as competitors had to contend with a strong headwind on the out section meaning 13 miles of extra hard effort for not a lot of reward. In the end, Steve was glad to finish in 3:20:38 for 3rd place and hoping that day two would be a little calmer!

Arriving at the start line on day two, Steve was relieved to find the wind had dropped almost completely. In fact it was quite a nice day; a bit cold but clear blue sky and some sunshine made running conditions much more appealing. This resulted in a much better run as Steve finished in 3:13:13 for 2nd place on the day and 2nd place for the event as a whole (and Steve's 500th marathon in under 3hrs 28min).

The marathon journey continues. For now, 610 not out!



# 2013 Club awards

Some wore party hats and some didn't! But a good time was had by all at the annual Christmas Dinner and Club Awards presentation held at the Old Manse on 13 December.

None of the men worked hard enough to earn the prestigious speed-work trophy so it was given to Cather Wheeler for safe keeping and to remind her to put the effort in at speed work. Lynn **"please-don't-take-my picture"** Hudson won the women's trophy. Jan **"I haven't done anything"** Short was our most improved runner with 130 points, John Gibson was second with 121 points and Norm Lane was third with 104 points.



## Men open

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mike Smith
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Darren Long
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dennis Walmsley

## MV40

- 1<sup>st</sup> Darren Long

## MV45

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mike Smith
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ewen Smith
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Chris Dry

## MV50

- 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis Walmsley
- 2<sup>nd</sup> David Pyne

## MV55

- 1<sup>st</sup> John Gibson



## MV55

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Rob Humphris

## MV60

- 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Hulcup

## MV65

- 1<sup>st</sup> Norm Lane

## Age-related

- 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis Walmsley 2642.132 points over 3 events
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Smith 2631.587 points over 3 events
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Liz Hulcup 2561.468 points over 3 events



**Ladies open**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Shona Crombie-Hicks
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Claire Harrison
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ali Lane

**LV35**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Claire Harrison

**LV40**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Shona Crombie-Hicks

**LV45**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Steph Holton

**LV45**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Susan Hunt



**LV50**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Gill Carrick

**LV55**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ali Lane
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lynn Hudson

**LV60**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Liz Hulcup

**Most improved**

- Jan Short





# Bourton Roadrunners

## Juniors

### December 14 2013

Over 30 junior runners took the long trip to Malvern for the 3rd round of the **Gloucestershire Cross Country League**. This was one of the toughest courses they have run so far, very undulating with some very steep climbs. They all performed extremely well.

In the U11 girls, Bethan Powell led for most of the race just being overtaken in the later stages for 2nd, another excellent result that puts her 1st overall at this stage. Lauren Farley in her first league race had a fantastic run for 10th overall, certainly a name to watch out for, as she still has another year in this age group. Helena West was 3rd runner home in 14th place with her usual strong run, bringing the girls A team home in 2nd overall on the day.



Isobel Barnett keeps getting better with each race with 18th, Ella Davies 20th, another excellent performance in her first race and Isabel Kiey-Thomas after missing a great deal of training through illness is returning to fitness with a good 23rd place. These three girls bought the B team home in 5th place. This year's Race Champ Award, overall winner Libby Herbert gave her all for 25th, Megan Gibson in only her 2nd race did very well for 27th and Ellie Edgerton 30th led the C team home in 8th. Overall the U11 A team are currently 3rd with one race to go.

This year's Female Athlete of the year, Niamh Powell led the U13 girls' race from start to finish and leads the competition so far, all down to hard training and commitment she puts into her training. Lucy Griffin who only moved up to this age group this season is also a star in the making managing 5th after winning the Gloucestershire Schools Finals the week before. Veteran runner Felicity Darwent had another excellent run for 11th bringing the A team home in 1st place on the day. Josephine Mutsaars is starting to show her full potential for 14th after an impressive 3rd in the Gloucestershire Schools the week before. Charlotte Foster ran strongly for 21st, Gabby Jones did well for 32nd despite struggling home with an ankle injury, led the girls B team home in 6th. These girls were well supported by Kate Edgerton 35th, Isobel Hartley 37th and Emily Williams 39th bringing the C team home in 9th place. The U13 A team are currently leading the competition.



Rosie Mutsaars is starting to show the form she showed last year with an excellent 4th place in the U15 girls. Starting the race at the back she worked her way through the field to the leaders.

Dylan Williams again showed his talent with an excellent 4th place in the U11 boys and is currently 2nd overall in the competition so far. Josh Angus also showed his class with 13th despite missing recent training through illness. Louis Mutsaars who still has a year to go in this age group certainly has the ability to win it next season with another fine run for 19th bringing the A team home in 2nd on the day. Another star in the making is Beau Griffin who is only 9 and again ran extremely well for 22nd. Henry Bell had one of his best runs this season for 24th and Charlie Davidson ran strongly as usual for 26th. These three members bringing the B team home in 5th place. The U11's were well backed up by a group of runners all 9 or under with at least two more years in this age group, who all ran extremely well including Dicken Tilley-Loughrey 28th, Findlay Morriss 32nd, Alfie Griffin 47th, Toby Sellek 48th, Jacob Herbert 51st, George Quli 52nd and Christopher Hunt 53rd. These runners will certainly be stars in the future and brought the C team home in 8th and the D team home in 10th. The A team currently lead the competition.

**December 7 2013** The **Gloucestershire Schools AAA County Finals** took place at Plock Court on Saturday 7 December with the top 16 runners (12 guaranteed on the day), running for Gloucestershire at Cardiff in January. Our members certainly did the Club proud with some superb results.

Lucy Griffin showed her class by leading the Minor Girls race from start to finish and Josephine Mutsaars had her best race to date with a superb 3rd place. Kate Edgerton also ran extremely well for 23rd with 45 runners taking part.

Niamh Powell who just keeps getting better with all the hard training she puts in was rewarded with 4th and Felicity Darwent ran very well for 19th. Peter Wood, who managed 14th in the District Trials with a cold, managed 14th in the finals – a great result. Well done to them all and look forward to seeing Lucy, Josephine, Niamh and Peter at Cardiff.

**November 30 2013** Bourton Runners have a number of juniors who live or go to school in Warwickshire and on Saturday 30th November a few of our runners took part in the South Warwickshire School Race at Charlecote Park. Over 360 young people took part and our juniors did both themselves and our club proud. Dylan Williams dominated the Year 6 Boys race winning by a country mile with Josh Angus giving it his all to finish a very well deserved 5th. The ever improving Helenor West aka 'The Pocket Rocket' came 3rd in the Year 5 Girls Race. Annabella Williams was given special dispensation and allowed to run in the Year 4/3 Girls race despite being in Year 2 she finished an incredible 5th, showing the same promise and determination as her brother.

**November 22 2013** The **Cheltenham District Gloucestershire Schools Cross Country Trials** took part on Friday 22nd November including schools in the North Cotswold's. Although 16 runners are eventually picked only 12 runners on the day are guaranteed a place in the finals. The venue again was St Edwards Junior School at Charlton Kings and a tough course with a very steep hill to climb. Several of our members took part from the Cotswold School and Chipping Campden.

Josephine Mutsaars dominated the Minor girls race, leading from the start and eventually winning by a good margin. Kate Edgerton ran extremely well for 6<sup>th</sup>; Emily Williams ran strongly for 49th and Molly Vadher did well for 79th. John Nevins managed a respectable 53rd place in the Minor boys race.

Niamh Powell ran strongly as ever in the Junior girls race for 3rd with team mate Rosie Mutsaars just overtaking her in the final yards of the race for 2nd. A superb run by both girls. Felicity Darwent showed her class and experience for 9th, with these three girls making it through to the finals. Charlotte Foster ran well for 32nd and Gabby Jones despite injuring her knee for 43rd closely followed by Isobel Hartley, 46th.

Alfie Howell-Smith again showed his class with a very good run in the Inter boys for 7th and Peter Wood despite suffering a cold did extremely well for 14th. Both boys are likely to run in the finals at Plock Court, Gloucester.

**November 2 2013** Bourton Roadrunners again turned out in force for the 2nd round of the Gloucestershire Cross Country League at Pitville Park.

Bethan Powell again led the U11 girls home in an excellent 3rd, beating the girl who beat her in the previous round, putting her equal first in the competition so far. There was a great tussle between Jessica Hale, Isobel Barnett and Helena West for 2nd club member home. Jessica just beating the other two girls in 20th with Isobel 21st and Helena 22nd. Only four seconds separating them at the finish.

In the U11 boys, Dylan Williams ran extremely well again for 2nd, again being just beaten by Alex Grocott, however he has closed the gap since the Farm Park. Josh Angus did very well for 9th and Louis Mutsaars is certainly following in his sisters footsteps with a fine display for 19th. These boys brought the A team home in 2nd place. Overall, the U11 Boys managed to put out five teams achieving 2nd, 7th, 11th, 16th and 19<sup>th</sup>. What great support.

In the Under 13s, Niamh Powell who always works extremely hard in training again was rewarded with an excellent 2nd place, only eight seconds behind the winner and is currently 1st overall in the individual competition. Veteran member Felicity Darwent did extremely well to hang onto 7th place after leading the race for a time and Lucy Griffin who has only just moved up from the U11's is showing her true potential with a very good 9th place despite suffering badly from stitch towards the end of the race. This puts the U13 Girls A team in 1st place on the day and also 1st place overall.





# Coaching Corner

We can all learn from other people's performances as well as our own, so in this article I am going to tell you what helped me win the Bourton Roadrunners age-related trophy. Now let's get this straight, this is not an egocentric trip, just my shared experience that hopefully you can relate to and help evaluate your own successes or failures.

I have struggled this year with fitness after having a number of minor injuries or physical difficulties resulting in less training and no long distant races. I had to pull out of training for London and never made the World Masters Champs. I did however **persevere** in my **training** to keep some base level of **fitness**. My good scoring **performances** had been in the first couple of months this year and other races were a matter of survival and a desire to get the points for the V50 county series.

About five or so weeks before the end of the age related competition, I was leading by less than a point and, although pleased for Mike doing a cracking time at Bucharest, I was dismayed that I was then 12 points behind. I made a **conscious decision** that I was not going to let the cup slip out of my grasp. I was just coming into some short distance fitness so put all my eggs in one basket targeting the Tewksbury 5m needing 11 seconds faster than my previous 5m best this year. I forfeited the Bugatti 10k (too hilly) and the Stroud Half (too long) to **attack** Tewksbury. I had a **plan** and that was to go out fairly **hard** and try and **maintain** it. It was the first race for some months that I could actually **push** myself physically so, despite three other athletes on my shoulder, I never let the pace drop as it was all about my time, not position. At four miles I still **believed I could do it** and, although I **gave it my all**, I was nine seconds short of my target. This left me four points shy of the title. Was I going to let it go? No! I was even more **determined** to win it now. I thought '**don't give up**' so searched for some more races. With under three weeks to go I travelled to Leicester to run a 5k to no avail as I was a minute slower than I had hoped. **Undeterred** I went to Stratford, again another 5k race with a result nine second short of my target again. Now you could say all the above was a failure but the deadline now being only a week away I found one more race on the penultimate day and all this was to be good **preparation** and **practice** for my final race.

Milton Keynes 5m was a race I had done before and had picked it previously as a V40 due to the **fast times** so I was absolutely **confident** I was going to run a fast time. I set off at my 5k pace which I held to three miles constantly **monitoring** my time and just leaving enough to **work hard** in the last mile as that is where you can lose it most. I was never on my own due to the **quality** of the race and had a **target** athlete in front of me whom I believed to be in my age category so I **focused** on **beating** him to keep my pace going and after overtaking him with a half mile to go I was thinking how I had to stay ahead and concentrated more importantly in getting that time. This chance was never going to happen again and it was my last chance and after someone shouted that sub 28 was possible I ran my heart out. I smashed my **target** time and my **goal** was achieved.

Many factors have to be in place to achieve a target that you have aimed for or rise to a challenge. These could include your family / work routine, sleep, food / hydration, health, fitness and weather, to name a few. Most of all in my opinion is your mental state of mind which I believe was the overriding factor in my success above.

**True Quote:** It's not over till the fat lady sings!

**Top Tip:** If you want it, go and get it!