

The Finish Line



Bourton Roadrunners

December 2012

Over 13,000 miles raced in 24 years...

That's a marathon roughly every two and a half weeks, and I'm only counting the ones he ran in under 3 and a half hours...

On November 11th Steve Edwards was crowned "THE GODFATHER" of extreme marathon running when he crossed the finish line of his 577th marathon - the Enigma Fox @ 40 at Caldecotte Lake - to become the first athlete in the world to run 500 official Sub 3hr 30min Marathons.

It's been a long and impressive journey. In December 1990, aged only 28, Steve completed his first 100 marathons - and he's still the only person to make membership of the prestigious 100 Marathon Club at such a young age. From March 1991 to March 1992 he ran a record number of road marathons for a 52 week period. A staggering 87. Now he's also smashed his existing world record for running "500 marathons in the fastest average finish time", which now stands at 3hrs 15min 14sec.

Supported by many club members, fellow 100 Marathon Club runners and of course wife Teresa, he finished the race in 3:14.17 and took third place to boot. This marks the realisation of a long held dream for Steve. A dream the majority of us would have left just as that, but not Steve. His incredible determination has resulted in another world record and being crowned 'The Godfather' of extreme Marathon running.

Info taken from the 100 Marathon Club website and Steve's own press release. More on page 3 and Steve's interview with Tim Heming is on page 7.



A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Chair's Message: Page 2

President's Piece: Page 2

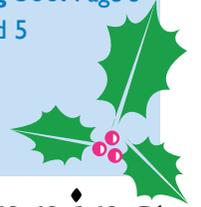
NEW FEATURE - Dogs in running kit: Page 2

Steve Edwards' Amazing 500: Page 3

Press Reports: Page 4 and 5

Junior News: Page 6

Godfather Interview by Tim Heming: Page 7



Lucy in winning England Team

At the British & Irish Masters Cross Country International held in Belfast on November 10th, Lucy Walmsley represented her country and in an outstanding performance against strong competition, helped England's Vet 40 ladies to a Gold Medal. Lucy was 5th in her age category, and 3rd member of the triumphant English team to finish. Modestly Lucy says she's pleased, and surprised, with her performance. Well we're proud of you Lucy!



Chair's Message

Congratulations to Steve Edwards on completing his mission of 500 marathons in under 3 hours 30 minutes.

The recent Gloucestershire Cross Country fixture was a great disappointment in that we failed to field teams in either of the senior events, the only team being the Veteran Men.

On a brighter note however there were again some excellent results in the Juniors especially Under 13 Girls. Congratulations to Claire and Norm on managing to run two events in two days. Certainly the English weather showed how it can change!

I was delighted to see such a large number of members taking an interest in the Steve Humphries Memorial Trophy. 16 members replied nominating 9 different people. If you want to know who has won you will have to turn up at the tinsel run where the trophy will be presented.

All Good Wishes to All Members for the Festive Season.

Robin Macdonald, Chairman



TINSEL RUN

Let's get festive and celebrate the Junior members' fabulous achievements

18th DECEMBER
From
The Cotswold Way
at 7pm to run
Presentations
from 8pm

Don't forget your Hi-vis and lots of Tinsel !!!

The draw for London Marathon Places will take place so please make sure your rejection slips are given in ASAP

INTRODUCING TWO NEW MEMBERS

Yes, these are the depths to which this newsletter has sunk. With a complete absence of new babies, weddings, engagements, or any other human interest stories, I am left reporting on two new canine members - Scruff Walmsley (top) and Poppy Hunt (below). They are cute though and it's good to see them sporting club colours so young.

All together now... aaaaaah!

Now if you don't want more of the same, send me some proper news! (Editor)

President's Piece

(Not of the cod variety!)

First of all I must thank those of you who nominated and voted me on as President of Bourton Roadrunners for a second term. It is with pride that I accept this honour of representing the club in this way.... especially as I don't actually have to do anything! I also



want to thank all those who spoke to me and took time to write and gave me encouragement your support gave me great comfort.

I feel that I should be very open and let you know about my past, after all there are a lot of new members who probably don't even know me and maybe one or two old ones who only think they do!

Most of you know I compete as a runner so here is a picture from one of my past events in which you can clearly see the man I used to be!

Maybe I should resurrect the old me as the women of our club have been doing exceptionally well this year with 20 -30 minutes being knocked off marathon times, loads of age category wins, a high class international marathon performance, island wins and international x/c honours.

Wow! come on men we have to step up to the plate, lets show them what we can do in 2013. Our women are an inspiration.

(also see Coaching Corner).

Dennis Walmsley - Club President

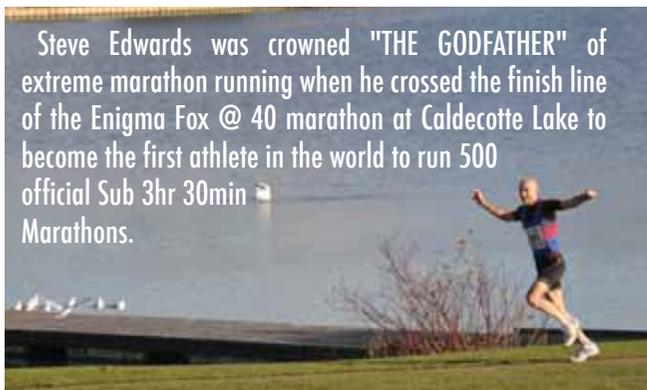


Shona est vainqueur de son groupe d'âge dans la Marathon de La Rochelle

Following on from Guernsey (1st) and Jersey (1st) Shona has added to her 2012 medal haul list a 1st Vet 40 and 3rd lady in the race overall in an extremely competitive field at Rochelle in France It would appear that crossing the Channel is a good omen for Shona, I hope she managed to find some Poisson et Frites for her pre race supper!

(with apologies to anyone who actually does speak French - Editor)

Steve Edwards was crowned "THE GODFATHER" of extreme marathon running when he crossed the finish line of the Enigma Fox @ 40 marathon at Caldecotte Lake to become the first athlete in the world to run 500 official Sub 3hr 30min Marathons.



Finishing 3rd in a time of 3hrs 14min 17sec, it was the perfect finale to an incredible 24 year journey to smash my own world record for running "500 marathons in the fastest average finish time", which now stands at 3hrs 15min 14sec.

Sunday 11th Nov 2012 was a very special and emotional day which I will remember for the rest of my life. I felt incredibly honoured to be cheered around the course and at the finish line by many members of Bourton Roadrunners and also the 100 Marathon Club and Brathay 10 in 10 club who all came out to either run or support. To also have my immediate family there to see me do it, my wife Teresa, son Jason and daughter in law Christine along with my 3 young grandchildren, Alyssa, Farren and Courtney, that made it even more special

I would like to say a big sincere thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years, to all those who have shared the journey with me, my club colleagues at Bourton Roadrunners, 100 Marathon Club and Brathay 10 in 10 club, my sponsors Team Mannatech Nutrition and Sub Sports Clothing, my family & friends and most importantly my wife Teresa, without her support and understanding I know this wouldn't have been possible.

I once had a dream ... all the effort, all the hard work, the blood, the sweat and the tears .. 24 years of focus, discipline and dedication .. and now that dream is realised.

Where do I go from here? ... who knows ... for now it's a time to just savour the moment! *Steve Edwards*



Press Reports

October 21st (by Susan Hunt)

Bourton Roadrunners were out in force at the **Stroud Half Marathon**, with some superb results.

In a field of over 1100 runners, Shona Crombie-Hicks was 8th lady and 1st vet 40 with 1:21:27. With Steph Lane recording a fantastic 1:29:35 and Claire Harrison (just 2 weeks after Chester Marathon) setting a PB of 1:31:14, Bourton won the 2nd placed Ladies' Team prize. Darren Long was the first Bourton man home (and 10th male in the race) in a brilliant 1:24:11 and Nigel Frith showed that he is back from injury with a PB of 1:31:30. Rob Humphris finished in 1:37:35 and Andy McCoombes was 3 minutes quicker than in last week's Cardiff Half Marathon with 1:38:20.

Steph Holton was next in, smashing her PB by an astonishing 7 minutes with 1:41:23, chased by Chris Dry running his first half marathon in a fantastic 1:43:06. A happy Susan Hunt knocked 5 minutes off her PB in 1:44:58, with David Pyne continuing his steady improvement with a PB of 1:46:01 and Liz Hulcup in a well-paced 1:46:17 for 3rd Vet 60.

Next in was Roger Woodley, finishing his 100th half marathon in 1:47:17, accompanied by John Gibson and Brian Hulcup.

Ed Rozier finished in 1:54:37, Shirley Creed 1:58:43 and Lynn Hudson (perfectly paced to break 2 hours) in 1:59:10.



October 29th (by Susan Hunt)

The last weekend in October saw Bourton Roadrunners taking part in 5 different events across the country.

Firstly, on Saturday was the **Snowdonia Marathon**, which fully deserves its reputation as one of the world's toughest marathons, featuring gruelling climbs through spectacular scenery. Dennis Walmsley (5 times winner of the event), took on the challenge, despite having been laid low by illness during the preceding week. Dennis held onto 7th place for the first half of the race; before the effects of his illness caught up with him and he showed remarkable bravery and fortitude to continue to battle up the climbs of the second half (including a final 1200ft climb, followed by a steep, uneven descent), to finish in 3:15:31 and 3rd V50 out of a field of 2,200.

Also on Saturday was the cross country 4.5 mile race at **Plock Court**, which was a clean sweep for the Bourton men with Daryl Kiel Thomas 1st V40, Chris Hartley 1st V45, and Norm Lane 1st V60.

Sunday was Race 1 of the challenging **Threshold 10k Winter Series**, held in Ilmington and featuring a relentless 3K hill climb. Niamh Shoemark had a great run for 3rd Lady in 49.26 and Susan Hunt was 1st V45 in 51.18. Gill Carrick finished in 53.23, Jan Short in 54.59 and Emma McCoombes in 1:04.

In contrast, to this local hilly rural race was the "flat and fast" 10 mile **BUPA Great South Run** in Portsmouth, with a record 25,000 entries. First Bourton Roadrunner to finish was Steph Holton, with a huge PB of 1:17:09. John Gibson finished in 1:23:00 with Caroline Middleton in 1:23:14. Gary Holton celebrated his return from injury by taking over 5 minutes off his PB, finishing in 1:39:53.

Finally, in cold, wet and windy conditions, Steve Edwards crossed the finish line of the **Preston Marathon** in a time of 3:14:03, becoming the first person in the UK to run 250 sub 3:15 marathons.

November 5th (by Susan Hunt)

At the 2nd race in the **Gloucestershire Cross Country League series in Pittville Park**, Cheltenham, the seniors had some excellent results. In the Ladies race, Lucy Walmsley finished 5th overall and 1st vet40 and Claire Harrison finished a fantastic 48th in her cross country debut. In the men's race Tony Goodwill was 94th, Rob French 107th, Chris Hartley 154th, David Pyne 194th and Norm Lane 205th and 3rd V65.

Heavy, persistent, freezing rain made November 4th one of those days when we question the wisdom of our choice of sport, as we stood shivering on the start line of the **Guy Fawkes 5** at Tewkesbury. Some of us (Claire, David and Norm) had even raced the previous day in similarly cold; but mercifully drier conditions at the Cross Country. As the race starter began to relay muffled instructions, one runner spoke for all 350 by shouting "just blow the bloody whistle!". And so 19 Bourton Roadrunners were off, dodging mud and puddles, detouring along a relentless out-and-back (a cruel addition to this year's race which at least provided an opportunity to gloat at slower runners) and wondering why it was necessary for a motorway bridge to be so long and so steep.

First in for the club was Darren Long in 30:14 and 1st MV40. Shona Crombie-Hicks was 1st lady in 30:34 with Steph Lane 4th lady in 32:43. Nigel Frith was next in with 32:57 and Claire Harrison continued her impressive first racing season with a 5 mile debut of 34:18. Ever-enthusiastic Claire had entered the race twice and given her spare number to Rob Humphris, so it was appropriate that he ran the race on her shoulder, finishing in 34:43. Brian Hulcup ran an excellent race with 35:57. Steph Holton had her eyes firmly set on a county medal and secured it with a confident 36:42. Once again, Chris Dry was chasing Steph and hung on

Press Reports

Nov 5th continued

valiantly for 37:10, just managing to hold off a tactical Ali Lane who had moved through the ranks in the closing stages for 37:15. David Pyne had another good run with 38:02 and Liz Hulcup was 1st LV55 with 38:15. Gill Carrick ran well with 38:53, Norm Lane finished in a determined and cheerful 40:41 and Shirley Creed was delighted with 41:59 (4 minutes quicker than last year). Lynn Hudson also finished way ahead of last year in 42:22 and Alan Gibson pipped his dad on the line in 42:45 with John Gibson 42:46. The 19th Bourton Roadrunner, Susan Hunt, wasn't awarded a time or position, since she completed the final mile of the race by car.

November 18th (by Susan Hunt)

On Saturday 18th November, Jan Short and Andrew Evans headed off to Long Marston, near Stratford-upon-Avon for the **Shakespeare Raceway 10k and Half Marathon**. This is an event run in March and November each year, which comprises 3 race distances (5k, 10k and Half Marathon). Runners in all 3 races set off together and run either 1, 2 or 4 laps of a disused airfield, depending on their chosen distance. The pancake-flat race track has potential for fast times, especially on days when the wind isn't blowing a hooley. The scenery is not a distraction in this race (unless you have a personal passion for concrete and weeds). The finish is on super-smooth tarmac alongside a grandstand, usually sparsely dotted with supporters armed with flasks or bacon rolls and huddled under coats (it always seems to be cold there). Happily, conditions on the day were perfect for racing. Jan was determined to record a sub-50 minute 10k, having been burdened with injuries over recent months, and zoomed around the course in 48:42 and 3rd FV45. Andrew chose the biggie, running the half marathon in an excellent 1:43:25. (Incidentally, the results page

of this event contains extensive video footage of the race, proving that there is definitely nowhere to hide when you enter a race these days.)

This really was the weekend to run on an airfield, with the **Runway 10k** taking place at Gloucestershire Airport on Sunday, superbly organised by CLC Striders. Chris Dry was the sole Bourton representative (although he did claim to see Lynn Hudson running the other way). Ever-determined Chris is a man on a mission to run a sub-45 10k. Chris flew around the airfield, landing himself a PB (by almost 2 minutes) in 46:26.

Meanwhile one week on from achieving Godfather marathon running status with his 500th sub 3:30, Steve Edwards tackled the **Luton Marathon**. On a stunning autumn day, he finished his 33rd marathon of the year in 3:12:37 then went home for a whole week's rest.

November 26th

Eynsham 10k (by Chris Dry)

After a night of torrential rain and with more than 200 flood warnings in place over the South West, there was a palpable sense of relief looking at the Eynsham Roadrunners website on Sunday morning.

The Eynsham 10k is on! is all that was needed for more than 550 athletes to make their way to the Oxfordshire Grand Prix and Bourton Roadrunners (and supporters) were out in force for the final event of its six from 10 club competition.

Darren Long was first BRR home. His 38.37 was good enough for 55th overall and 16th MV40. Steph Lane was first BRR lady and 3rd overall in 40.51. Ali Lane was 3rd FV45 in 45.00 and – with the day's stand-out performance - Liz Hulcup was 1st FV55 in 47.18.

Other BRR finishers were: Claire Harrison, 43.11; Rob Humphris, 44.05; Andy Peaston, 44.15; John Gibson, 44.46; Chris Dry, 44.56; Brian Hulcup, 45.29; Steph Holton, 47.14; Peter Carrick, 47.45; David Pyne, 48.10; Gill Carrick, 48.31; Shirley Creed, 51.39; Lynn Hudson,

54.03; Gary Holton, 1.01.10.

Highlight club performances include a new PB from Claire Harrison who managed a PB despite disappointment at missing her target of sub 43 minutes, and Chris Dry who achieved his first sub 45-minute 10k and in just two races has knocked a massive 3.24 minutes off.

"I had made it clear to everyone before the race that I was going for sub 45 and was a bit worried about blowing up and looking foolish," said Chris. "And I needed the help of three coaches to get me there" he said. "While Dennis and Norm shouted their instruction from the sidelines, it was John Gibson's influence that made the difference on the day. He picked me up at about 4k when I was struggling and quickly helped to settle me into the pace I needed. It was touch and go throughout with the sprint past Ali Lane at the end sufficient for me to reach my season's goal!"

Threshold Winter Series Race 2 (by Susan Hunt)

When I was woken early on 25th November by the sound of wind and lashing rain, I was momentarily relieved to be injured and therefore not running in the Ilmington 10k. Then I remembered that, in my quest for a season's hoody, I had volunteered to marshal.

Happily, by the time the race started, conditions had improved. Niamh Shoemark and Jan Short had both returned to tackle the monster hill in reverse (the race is run in alternate directions each month).

Niamh was 18 seconds quicker than last month, finishing 5th lady in 49.08. Jan finished an impressive 1 minute and 46 seconds quicker than in race 1, scooping the FV45 prize in 53.13.

The Bourton ladies' improvement was clear testament to the hard training they have put in since last month, and also perhaps, partly due to the enthusiastic and heart-felt support that they received (in 3 different positions on the course) from a certain race marshal.



Bourton Roadrunners Juniors

Reports by Richard Bufton

Plock Clourt

The cross country race for young athletes took place at Plock Court on Saturday 27th October. This was a good sharpener for the next Gloucestershire league race. Held over 1.5 mile course on a very chilly windy day, Bourton had a good turnout.

In the Girls' race Lucy Griffin is returning to race form to win the Year 6 category well in 9mins 11secs. Gaby Jones had a strong run to win the year 7 race in 9mins 42secs. Issy Kiey Thomas had yet another race win to take the year 5 race in 10mins 12secs. Issy Hartley struggled in the strong wind with her breathing and battled round well to finish 2nd year 7 in 10mins 39secs.

In the Boys race Joe Salf's hard training is starting to pay off with a good win in the year 9 race in the tough conditions in 8mins 50secs. Marcus Kiey Thomas had a good solid run to finish 1st year 6 boy in 12mins 8secs. He was closely followed by Daniel Bufton who won the year 6 race in 12mins 15secs. Chris Hunt had a great run today as he took the year 3 race in 12mins 22secs.



Schools XCcountry Champs

The Gloucestershire Schools Cross Country Championships took part at Newent Community School over a demanding course including a very muddy part known as the Scraggs that was quite waterlogged after the recent wet weather.

Several members who made it through the regional finals again did extremely well in the finals. In the Minor Girls, Felicity Darwent and Niamh Powell started off strongly in the top ten with Felicity in the top three and Niamh only slightly behind. Felicity had to drop out after injuring her ankle, Niamh stormed through the last quarter to a fantastic 2nd place. Gabby Jones is gaining in experience and again did very well. After sensibly starting towards the back of the field she worked her way up to a very respectable 24th.

The Junior Boys and Girls also did extremely well with Rosie Mutsaars always in the top 15 and eventually working her way through to 9th. Alfie Howell-Smith and Peter Wood (despite a late call up), both did themselves proud. Alfie was always up in the top 12 and put in a very strong last quarter moving him up to an excellent 6th place. Peter ran strongly as ever and during the race worked his way up to a very good 21st place.

Up to 64 runners took part in each race, 16 top runners from each region in Gloucestershire. The top 12 runners from each race will go through to the Inter Counties at Cardiff in January.

Pittville Park

The next round of the Gloucestershire Cross Country League took place at Pittville Park on Saturday 3rd November. Conditions were very muddy and hard going and once again there was a fantastic turnout without over 30 Bourton juniors competing.

The under 11 girls led the way with Lucy Griffin fast out of the blocks, she was always near the front in a very competitive race and she just missed out on a win but had a very good podium finish in 3rd in 7mins 56secs. Josephine Mutsaars had another very encouraging run to finish 5th in 8mins and 6secs. Kate Edgerton is always very consistent and once again today she produced a great run in 18th in 8mins 55secs. She was very closely followed by the ever improving Isabel Kiey Thomas in 19th in 8mins 59secs. Helena West once again had very solid run and gave her all to finish 26th in 9mins 20secs. Laura Heming battled round very well to finish 34th in 9mins 44secs. Ellie Edgerton in her second race ran very confidently considering she is one of the youngest in the race to finish an excellent 36th in 9mins 54secs. However just behind was Libby Herbert with a fantastic finish to record 9mins 56secs in 37th and she has plenty more to come. Just behind there was real battle going on between Mollie Vadher in 43rd in 10mins 38secs, Isobel Nevins in 44th in 10mins 39secs and Emily Williams in 45th in 10mins 40secs - a great race. In the overall league the girls are 2nd, 8th and 12th.

The under 11 boys race was once again a very competitive and fast. Dylan Williams ran very well again to finish 8th in 7mins 46secs but once again fast on his heels was Max Pinkham in a strong finish in 11th in 7mins 52secs. Elliot England had a storming run in 15th position to record 8mins 10secs - tremendous potential here. Charlie Davidson had a strong run just behind in 17th in 8mins 14secs. He also had John Nevins on his heels in great performance. Race by race he is climbing up the field to finish here in 19th in 8mins 17secs. Henry Bell is also improving a lot with a good performance today in 25th in 8mins 33secs. Daniel Bufton and Jack Lainton had a good battle today with Daniel just beating Jack on the line in 38th and 39th in 9mins 1sec and 9mins 2secs. Chris Hunt had a strong solid run in 52nd in 10mins 6secs. In the overall league the boys are 2nd and 6th.

In the under 13 girls race Rosie Mutsaars once again produced a fantastic run to hold off a very strong field to take her 2nd win in the series in 10mins 29secs and remain unbeaten. Felicity Darwent also ran very well today to finish 4th in 10mins 40secs. Gabby Jones was not 100% today but determined not to let the team down she battled round very well to finish 17th in 11mins 54secs. Isobel Hartley also had a strong run today to finish well in 24th in 13mins 7secs. In the overall league the girls are 2nd.

In the U13 boys race Marcus Kiey Thomas is always a very consistent performer - as he was today, finishing 38th in 14mins 15secs.

Alfie Howells-Smith has been training hard and it showed today as he finished in a much improved position of 10th in the very competitive under 15 boys race, and there is plenty more to come. Peter Wood is also making great progress to finish 15th in 22mins 58secs. Joseph Salf has also been putting in a lot of hard work and it paid dividends today with a great run in 17th in 23mins 10secs. It is good to see Alex Darwent racing again in his 5th consecutive year in the league to produce a good run today in 23rd in 27mins 36secs. Alex Barter also had a solid run today as he battled round well in 24th in 29mins 17secs. Overall in the league the boys are 3rd.

What happened at the cannibal's wedding party? They toasted the bride and groom!

How can you help a starving cannibal? Give them a hand!

Interview

Even in a world of increasingly epic endurance feats, the running achievements of Steve Edwards take some topping. On Sunday morning, a week shy of his 50th birthday, he cracked the three hour 30 minute barrier in an official marathon for a world record 500th time. His 3:14 effort in Milton Keynes was the triumphant culmination of a 24-year quest for the Bourton Roadrunner, it was his 577th marathon in total and he has NEVER failed to finish. TIM HEMING caught up with Steve to talk about the physical, mental and even more taxing logistical challenges he has overcome.

Congratulations Steve, can you describe how you feel now?

It was only in the last half mile that it sunk home what a massive achievement it was - to be the first in world to achieve this, it made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. The respect everybody had was humbling, the organisers did a special race number, No 500 with the nickname 'the Godfather' printed underneath.

I had my three lovely grandchildren here and even they realised something special was happening. I knew it would be quite emotional. I've been visualising it in training runs this week, and just been welling up about it. It's my Olympics and the closest I'll get to any sort of major achievement as an ordinary person.

I'd been full of cold most of the week and nervous, which is really unusual. It's taken 24 years. There have been times I've thought: 'Is it all worth it?' Now it's here, I look back and think: 'Where's the time gone?'.

Taking you right back, did you come from a sporty family and a long line of runners?

Not at all. Mum wasn't bothered and Dad's become more of an interested spectator as he got older, but they were always keen on getting me to do activities. I enjoyed playing sport at school but didn't run more than 400m on the track. At cross-country I would be hiding in bushes until the last lap.

It was only after leaving I got into it and ran my first aged 18. In 1981 it was the running boom. Every city had a marathon and Coventry, where I was born and raised, was no exception. I gave myself six weeks to train and ran five miles a day round a track in an old pair of trainers. On race day, at 17 miles, the wheels came off. I didn't know what was happening to my body, I didn't know whether to walk, stop or sit down. It was just a case of getting to the finish. I ran 3hrs 38min. The next day my legs felt like gateposts.

After that experience, what was the spur to becoming a multi-marathoner?

Around 1986 I started knuckling down and training, running all different distances. I was never going to be a really fast runner but had pretty good endurance.

The move towards multiple marathons was born out of a chat with running coach Cliff Temple, who said if I trained properly I should expect to run 2hrs 30mins. That was never going to get me near a GB vest and not long after I read about an American guy running 500 marathons completed in an average time just over 3hrs 30mins. That sowed a seed. Later in 1988 I met a guy who was attempting to run the most in a year. At the time the record was 52. He introduced me to the 100 Marathon Club and when and I saw

how young I was compared to its members, I started looking at other record attempts. Becoming the youngest person to run 100 was the first real target. I achieved it in 1990, aged 28. During 1991 and 1992 I did 87 in a 12 month period for another world record. It was just a case of chipping away.

The Brathay 10-in-10 in 2007 rejuvenated my interest. Racing every weekend was starting to drag, then I had the invitation. It was something different. I'd done triples and quads but never 10 in 10 days. I was beaten by about five minutes over the whole event. It demonstrated weaknesses in my body and made me re-evaluate the way I train. I concentrated on core work, specific exercises on the calves and Achilles, the glutes and the lower back. I'd always worked on my upper body strength, but now I was doing lots of legs raises and single leg squats. Piling the miles in wasn't enough and the other stuff really helped.

In 2008 I went back and knocked two hours off the total time.

Was there ever a point, when you stopped in a race and thought: Why am I doing this?

The Stevenage marathon in 1994. It was a two-lap course on footpaths and the most boring marathon I ever ran. Halfway around I thought: 'What am I doing?' and walked back to the car. I sat with my wife, Teresa, and had a cup of coffee and a Mars bar and said: 'I can't be bothered'. After 10 minutes I thought I'd better go and finish it.

If you could start again on marathon number one would you do anything differently?

Yes - now we've got the internet and information at our fingertips. If I had the knowledge I have now at the very beginning. I'd wear proper running shoes, my diet and nutrition would be a lot better. I'd do more core work, and join a club a lot quicker. Today, people haven't got any excuses for not getting it right, but new runners should understand there is no magic banana, you have to put the effort in.

What has been your toughest marathon?

The Swiss Alpine was hard. With 10 miles to go I was in excruciating pain and every time I put my foot on the floor it was horrible.

Another one was in Cornwall on Bodmin Moor. It was freezing cold in the Cornish Marathon and we faced a full-on hailstorm for 15-20 minutes. With no hair, it was like someone

throwing stones at you. It felt like my head was being cut. There was no escape, I just covered up with my arms. It was hard not to cry and is not an experience I want to repeat, it was really frightening.

I also had an embarrassing and serious incident in September. It has to be pretty cold before I wear anything more than a vest, but in the New Forest Marathon, although it was wet, I didn't appreciate how much chillier it would get. I paid the price and just after halfway felt cold in upper body. Before I knew something was wrong, hypothermia was setting in. You think you can force your body to do things but I learnt the body will take its own precautions and I felt myself shutting down. The last mile marker I remember seeing was at 20 miles, my pace got slower and fortunately I got to the finish line and wasn't found in a ditch. They had a stretcher and threw blankets all over me and Teresa was really worried. I felt an idiot the next day. I'm an experienced guy, and it dented my pride. I made a massive mistake but you have to take it on the chin. It goes to show you never stop learning.

Have you considered a sponsorship deal with Vaseline?

Maybe I should, I've got through a few tubs in my life.

After today, will you keep on with marathons or try other challenges?

I've been winding people up and saying this might be my last ever marathon. But running is a way of life and I can't ever imagine not doing it.

The furthest I've run is 50 miles and I've had friends who say you're not a real runner until you've done a 100-mile race, so that's a possibility. I'm also tempted by 12-hour and 24-hour events. I wonder, with the endurance I've built up over the years, what I might be able to do. I could have a hidden talent. It's a totally different discipline but even if it went horribly wrong, at least I've tried.

By Tim Heming, with thanks to Pauline Teague, Mick Hunt and Jo Lewis for their questions



Tim wrote this piece for Run247 and the web article contained these shots of Steve with hair. Sorry I can't credit the photographer but they had to be used! (editor)



Coaching Corner by Dennis Walmsley

Dark nights, cold wet weather, floods, pain, blood (hopefully not), sweat and tears **versus** comfy sofa, warm fire, glass of wine (optional!) and slippers relaxing in front of the TV?

Hmmm! Which would you prefer.... well, the former obviously! Lets look at it another way; socialising, keeping fit, camaraderie and sense of achievement V antisocial, unfit, bad head (optional) and lethargy.

Inspiration; You would think we wouldn't need it, we all have strong minds and the will-power to go and do things we could possibly perceive as awful, but so often we choose not to. All of us probably struggle at some stage and getting out the door can be too much bother, daunting or even a debilitating task. We beat ourselves up mentally for being weak, hope we can get by on as little as possible or wonder why we are doing it the first place and just give up. Then we remind ourselves of the positive sides of it as above.

But sometimes that's still not enough to drag ourselves round a dark dingy potholed road on a freezing evening. Even if we are out there and quite positive, a little inspiration can help us take another step and maybe help us achieve something more.

Who could not be inspired by the Olympics?

We can certainly admire all the achievements but if we think we are not likely to emulate them (or maybe you can!) then how about the Paralympics?

I don't know about you but I was surprised how compelling the Paralympics was. Less able body people pushing themselves to incredible limits that can better a lot, if not most, able body people, and put many of us to shame. These people find just living normally a challenge and yet choose to make life even harder.

If that is not inspiring I don't know what is.

This article probably will not help you much except that you might think about whether you are pushing yourself hard enough, because actually you have a choice whether to do it or not. Just think about those who suffer to do normal things. You have an ability so don't waste it.

Top Tip: To find your limits you have to push your limits

True Quote: Use it or lose it!



Dates for your diary

February 25th 2013 - Bourton Goldsmith's 10K

Enter quickly if you want to run as it's selling out fast. Not running? Then Ian will need marshals please so keep the day free!

Weekend of June 22nd/23rd 2013 - Bourton Triathlon

Junior (Biathlon) and Senior events right on our doorstep, from the Leisure Centre, with a nice warm indoor swim! Find it on facebook/BourtonTriathlon.